

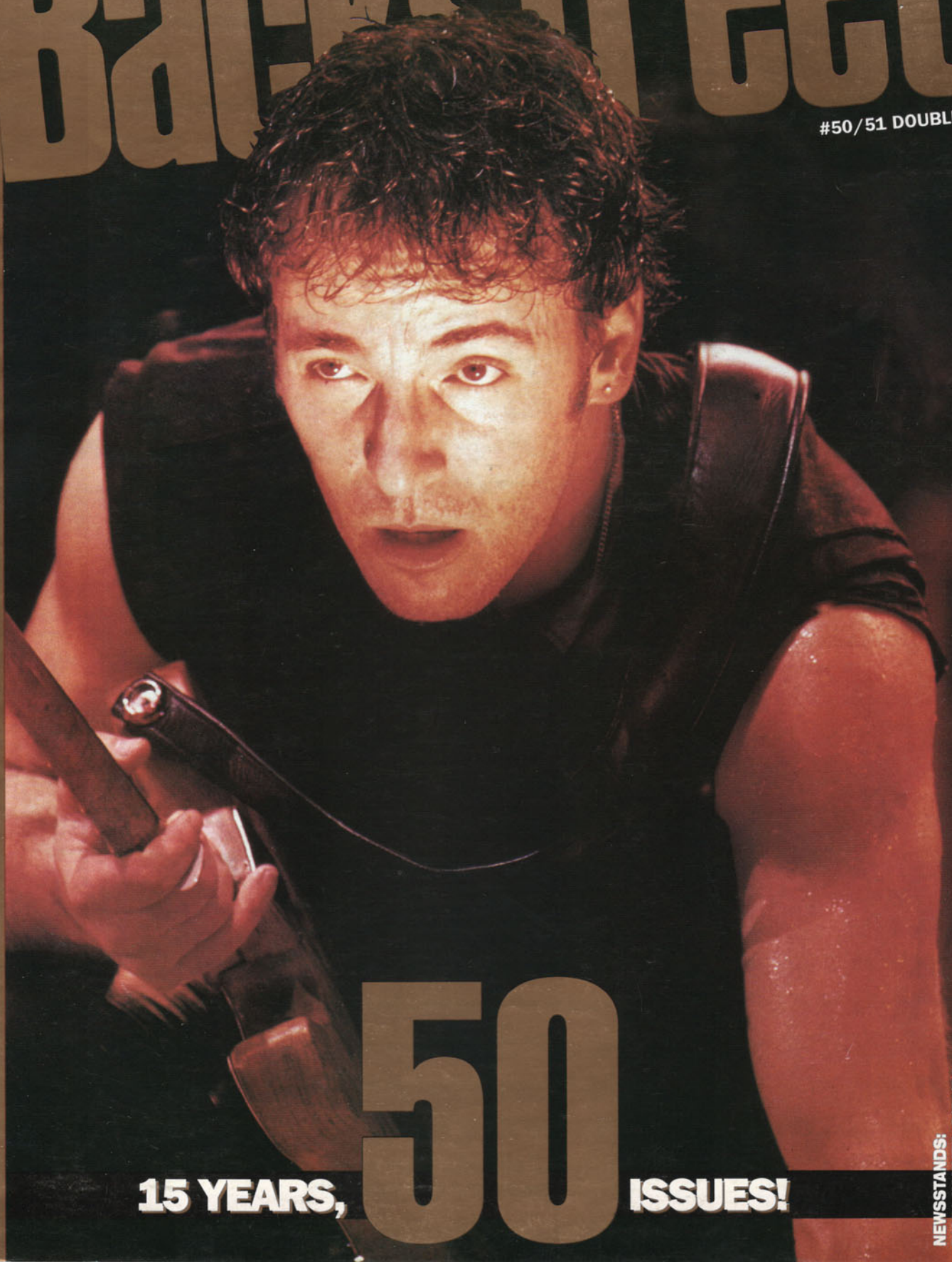
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SUMMER LATE FALL 1995

TOM JOAD REVIEWED

Backstreets

#50/51 DOUBLE ISSUE!

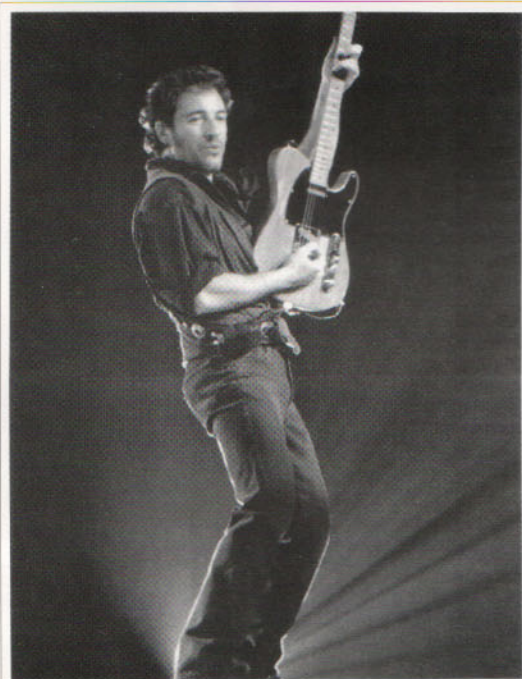
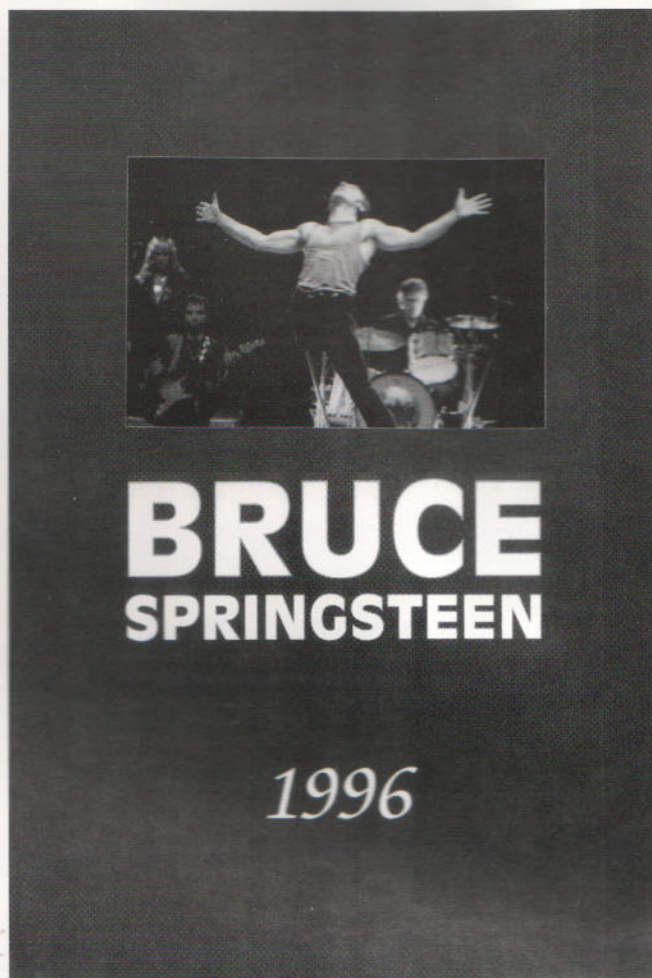
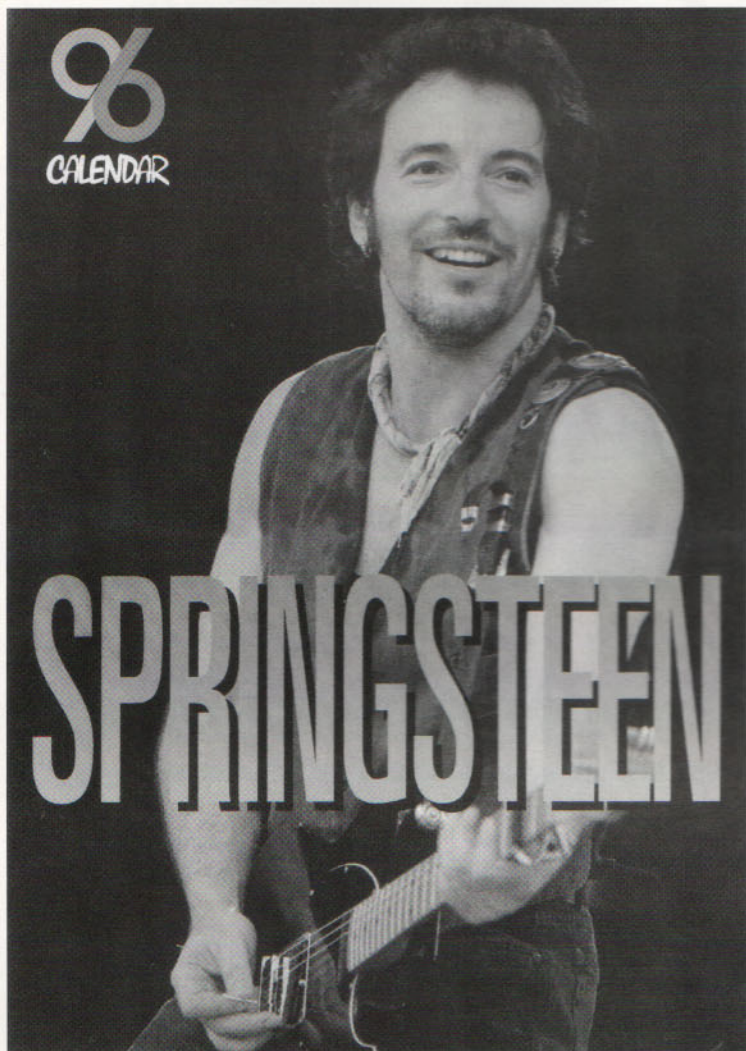


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June

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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1996 UK CALENDAR

The new UK calendar for 1996 has just arrived! This year's model from Oliver Books has 12 full page shots of Springsteen! We've shown a page at left so you can see the layout—the days of the month get low priority, but it's just to make room for some great shots of Bruce, 2 in black and white and 10 in full color!

UK CAL.....\$15

1996 EUROPEAN CALENDAR

New this year is a special Bruce calendar from Europe, and it's the complete antithesis of the one from the UK. As shown at right, each month has plenty of space for writing, and lists special Boss events that for various dates over the years. No full page photos, but lots of smaller ones spread throughout, corresponding with events, and many in color!

EURO CAL.....\$15

June

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

\$15 each or TWO FOR \$25!

These calendars are a great gift idea for any Springsteen fan, and we've got a special to help with your holiday shopping: get both calendars for your favorite Boss fan and save five bucks. You can also get two of the same calendar for the same special deal if you've got several Tramps on your list. Available from **BACKSTREET RECORDS**: give us a call at (206) 728-7603 or see inside back cover for ordering information.

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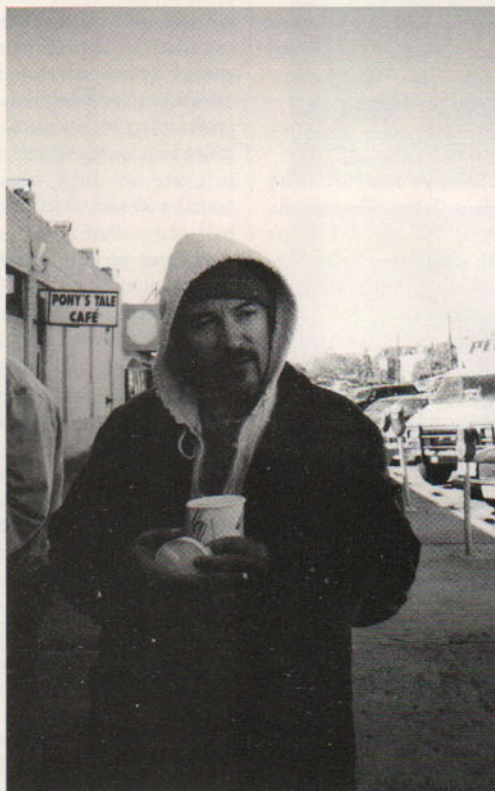
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1988, *Tunnel of Love* tour
Neal Preston Photo

OFF THE WALL

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

10/17/95, Asbury Park, NJ
Mark R. Sullivan Photo

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whose help is essential.

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LETTERS

SAME SAD STORY

Dear Editor:

I thought the bridge show was strange all the way around. Why was Bruce the third act to go on? A sizable number of the crowd was in attendance just to see Bruce, and he was finished by 8:30. I, and a good number of those around me, only stuck around to see if he might reappear later. I never thought I would see the day when Bruce Springsteen would play second fiddle to hacks like Hootie and the Blowfish.

And Bruce's performance? I think we were all expecting one of those goose bump-raising '86 Bridge/Christic Institute-type shows. There was nothing significant about his set, other than the appearance of the two new songs. He was very subdued, and he almost appeared to be downplaying his very appearance.

I think we all better hope that this solo acoustic tour is something more than just Bruce, his guitar, and his harmonica. Yeah, it will be great to see him in a small hall, but let's face it: he's not adept enough of an acoustic guitarist (or pianist, for that matter) to keep things interesting for a two-hour set night in and night out. He needs Nils, at the very least.

My fervent hope is that he didn't want to give away on Saturday what he has planned for the acoustic tour. In other words, I hope he is waiting to drop the

bomb then. Because of all the times that I've seen him, this was the first to really have me concerned about his next move. Maybe he has lost the ability to surprise. I can't be the only one worried that *The Ghost of Tom Joad* is *Nebraska* "Part Two." Not that *Nebraska* isn't great, but, for lack of a better phrase: been there, done that. It's almost as if he's responding to all the criticism of his being too happy or content on the last two albums by saying, "I'll show you that I can be pissed off—listen to this."

Dennis Lockard
Northampton, MA

SEASIDE BAR SONGS

Dear Editor:

What happened at The Tradewinds in July still gives me goose bumps. For once, I didn't hear on the radio how Bruce surprised an unsuspecting audience at a Jersey shore club. For once, I didn't read about a surprise Bruce appearance in *Backstreets*. Finally, I saw Living Proof!

Joe Grushecky was the headliner on this hot and humid Saturday night and a "hot tip" suggested that Bruce might make a cameo. As the crew set up for Grushecky's appearance, a crew member mistakenly used the house microphone to ask a colleague, "What channel are we putting Bruce on?"

Suddenly the room was abuzz, and within seconds I knew that I had indeed heard correctly as the familiar chants of "Broooooce" quickly filled the room. Hopefully, Bruce's partic-

ipation had just become a badly kept secret.

As Springsteen fever spread through the indoor-outdoor bar, the summer heat filled the room as hundreds of people squeezed together in hopes of an epiphany. Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers took the stage and began the drumbeat to "Not Fade Away." I know I wasn't the only one thinking "She's the One."

Four songs later, Grushecky disappeared stage right, slowly walked back to the microphone and simply said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, put your hands together for Mr. Bruce Springsteen." As befits a shore club, the crowd swelled like a storm surge, each trying to get as close to the stage as possible. Bruce sheepishly came on stage, wearing old jeans, a denim shirt and a baseball cap pulled down below his eyebrows as if to hide his true identity. He slowly roamed around the stage, tuned up his guitar, walked to the mic and, there, 20 feet in front of me, counted off what I've heard so many times on CD, in concert and in my dreams.

Echoed by the crowd, Bruce counted off one, two, one, two, three, four and so began "Lucky Town" and the beginning of two hours of Jersey shore rock and roll. There, right in front of me, was Bruce belting out "Darkness," "Atlantic City"... only twenty feet in front of me were years of dreams coming true. All of which I saw without binoculars.

There are moments in your life that you wish would never end. In this case, 2:00 a.m.

arrived too quickly. The evening left me physically and emotionally drained and as I left the Tradewinds, I heard someone utter, "That's what church should be like." I paused to think about that comment and I realized that it was true. There I was with hundreds of people who all came together and left with a common spirit of enjoyment, fulfillment and reaffirmation as to why they fell in love with music and, perhaps, Bruce Springsteen in the first place.

Terence Reilly
Pompton Lakes, NJ

WHAT IT MEANS TO STEAL

Dear Editor:

On October 20, 1995, my boyfriend and I drove from Atlantic City to Pittsburgh in hopes of getting tickets to Joe Grushecky's sold-out show at Nick's Fat City on Saturday the 21st. We waited for eight hours outside the box office on Saturday. I kept thinking all day, "Show a little faith, there's magic in the night." I put my faith to the test and it came through. Finally, around 11:15 pm, 15 tickets were released to 15 patient (not to mention freezing) fans. I was the first in line to buy a ticket and was so excited that I forgot to wait for my change! Unfortunately, not everyone who was in line got in and I felt bad for those fans. We walked in to Nick's just as Bruce took the stage. I was never so happy in all my life. We got in to the show, without paying the scalpers' prices of \$150!

At the end of the night, I discovered that someone had stolen my backpack. Inside was my wallet, cash, charge cards, camera, medication, house and car keys, etc. Needless to say, a perfect night was totally ruined. I have a very hard time believing a true Bruce fan would steal my backpack. If the person who stole it is reading this, I'd like to say that people like you don't deserve to be Bruce fans.

Linda Iorio
Clifton, NJ

SOMETHING IN THE NIGHT

Dear Editor:

After I sent you a note about my experience on October 17 at the Stone Pony, I thought about

THUNDER ROAD!

In celebration of *Backstreets* 15th Anniversary, we were able to purchase some rare and out of print copies of *Thunder Road*, the first Springsteen fanzine from 1978. Though this magazine has been out of business for almost 15 years, these back issues are still essential reading for any Bruce fan. Well designed and written, these contain many gorgeous photos and unique interviews and articles. Very hard to find now, but the copies we've located are in mint condition.



Thunder Road #2:

20 pages, with great Lynn Goldsmith cover photo (which has never been used anywhere else). Filled with other great unique photos—including another Goldsmith. Includes a Southside Johnny interview and all the lyrics to *The Wild, The Innocent and the E. St. Shuffle!* Essential.....\$15

Thunder Road #6/7:

64 pages. The final and last issue from 1981. Features an awesome Joel Bernstein cover photo. Inside are dozens of exclusive Goldsmith photos, a Roy Bittan interview, a 1980/81 tour wrap-up plus more.....\$15



Available from **BACKSTREET RECORDS**—see inside back cover for ordering information!

exactly what that day meant to me. You see, October 17 has been a hard day for me for the past 17 years. My Mom died on that day when I was 11 years old. Since then, I have not only dreaded that day, but also the entire fall season. It reminds me every fall that as everything around me was dying, my mother was dying, too. But now, after meeting Bruce, getting my picture taken with him, getting his autograph and seeing an absolutely unbelievable show, I can now look back on that day with a smile, instead of just tears.

I've been following Bruce since I was eight years old—three years before my Mom died. So, when she passed away in 1978, it was Bruce that kept me company. *Darkness on the Edge of Town* was played so many times that the grooves were becoming worn. I have to say that that album helped me to keep my sanity. I was an 11-year-old who became an adult overnight. Not an easy task.

Now, I'm not saying that just because I met Bruce, I'll forget what that day means to me and my family. All I'm saying is that, somehow, fall doesn't mean only sadness for me anymore. I'll never forget the smell of the autumn air as I shook his hand and told him how happy I was to finally meet him. The coolness of that day will remind me how blasted hot it was inside the Pony. And the smiles and laughter around the Pony that day stand next to the tears and sadness in my heart. October 17 has finally become a very happy day in my life. Thanks, Bruce, for taking away some of the sadness. You'll never know what it means.

Susan Jensen
Briarcliff Manor, NY

TAKE 'EM AS THEY COME

Dear Editor:

I am a devout Springsteen fan; however, I am just now realizing that being a "real" fan often seems to be qualification or justification to grumble and flat-out bitch about every breath Springsteen takes.

I read the *Greatest Hits* issue [*Backstreets* #48] and was generally embarrassed by the behavior exhibited by some members of the so-called core audience, especially in letters to the Editor.

It seems to me that Springsteen put out an album—his album—so that those of us who want to may purchase it and enjoy. I am grateful for what his music has given my life, so I do not understand all the criticism; is it not criticism of the music but rather criticism for not getting each individual's version of the perfect compilation?

Those who complain about having to buy *Greatest Hits* to get the four new songs are the same "fans" who complain about extra songs on the CD singles. I am grateful to Bruce for offering the core audience as many opportunities as possible to get the music that we would otherwise never hear—and sorry that the very people he is giving to are complaining.

Some imply that hardcore fans *deserve* to be treated as the only audience. However, as an artist, Springsteen must give to himself first and then to as many as possible. He has said that he is targeting the casual fan, those who do not own every album and every single and every boot. However, look at the four "new" songs—obviously not commercial, two of which have been around for ages, and one which was basically included for one persistent-as-hell fan—which are basically for the hardcore fans, who still want to debate the order of the songs.

Remember, the whole story of the music is the gift for the hardcore fans. The individual songs pulled from the story (like singles or *Greatest Hits*) are still tremendous rock songs, despite being for the casual fans who may miss the bigger picture. Obviously, it is their loss, but I truly think they deserve the pieces. And so do we.

Louise Porter
Atlanta, GA

TOUGHER THAN THE REST

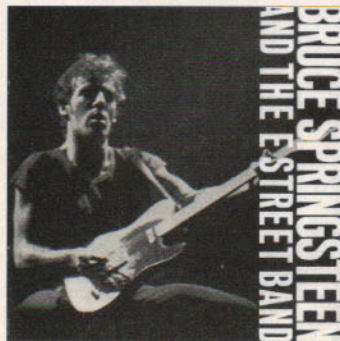
Dear Editor:

I wonder if I was the only one disappointed in the way your readers responded to *Greatest Hits*; for the most part, the feeling was very negative. Yes, the edited songs are a shame; sure, a hundred people would choose a hundred different combinations of songs. But let's celebrate what we did get. Take the time to re-read

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ORIGINAL SPRINGSTEEN TOURBOOKS

These officially licensed tourbooks are out of print and have been unavailable anywhere since they were sold exclusively at concerts. Essential items and great gifts for any Bruce fan!



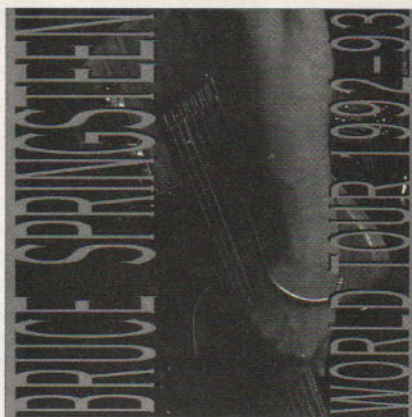
The original tourbook sold on the 1980-81 tour, 32 pages of outstanding photos of Springsteen and the band, including outtake shots from *The River* cover sessions. Many unique live shots from '78, too. Limited, a small amount back in stock!

THE RIVER • \$15



This lavish, oversized tourbook sold on the *Tunnel* tour contains dozens of striking color photos of Springsteen and the band, along with the lyrics to the LP (including "Roulette") and Bill Barol's excellent feature on *Tunnel* from *Newsweek*, 11/2/87.

TUNNEL OF LOVE • \$15



This 32-page color program features stunning color photos of Bruce on-stage and off, taken by Neal Preston, Annie Leibovitz, and others. Profiles on each of the new band members. Glossy covers, matte pages. A gorgeous edition.

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15 Years Burnin' Down the Road

The Fire We Was Born In

By Charles R. Cross

It was late October in Seattle and—big surprise—it was raining. It was that typical Northwest rain, not torrents, not an onslaught, but just a horizontal cascade of wetness that would mess up your glasses within ten seconds after wiping them off.

My glasses were fogged, there was rain falling down the back of my shirt, and I was already hoarse, a full hour before show time. And while I stood there handing out free copies of my new magazine—I'd titled it *Backstreets* since that was, and remains, one of my favorite Bruce Springsteen songs—I suddenly heard a sound that would send a chill through my heart: It sounded like the damn concert had already started. I put down my stack of magazines and ran to the side of the Coliseum, but by that time the sound was over. Later on, I'd find out I had missed "Good Rockin' Tonight" in a late soundcheck, "for all you early birds out there." I had front row seats that night (right next to Obie), and they'd been empty during this first song.

The press run of the first issue of *Backstreets* was 10,000. I'd figured that 15,000 people had bought tickets to Springsteen's upcoming Seattle show and I thought—in my naiveté—that every single person would want one. I'd conceived of the magazine as my own unofficial, free program for the concert, partially a response to how little attention Bruce was getting in the press in the Northwest. Being originally from the East Coast, I'd been initiated into the Springsteen cult some six years earlier. I'd seen some incredible Bruce shows since I'd moved west, even if they were few and far between (along with the awe-inspiring 12/20/78 show, which I wrote about in the first issue of *Backstreets*, the 6/23/78 show was one of the best concerts Bruce ever did). But I didn't think Bruce was getting the recognition he

deserved, and I thought *Backstreets* would help cure that.

I was still trying to finish up college at the time (on the six-year plan) and within my university newspaper I'd published a small arts magazine that was sort of the precursor to *Backstreets*. Titled "Pure Arts for Now People" (after the Nick Lowe album), it had featured a Springsteen cover story in the first issue, a 3000-word piece mostly about Dave Marsh's book *Born to Run*. A few Bruce Tramps I knew from outside the area had written me and requested the issue. I even got a letter from the fellows who did *Thunder Road* magazine. At the time, I was beginning to seriously collect Springsteen records, which meant I was reading collector's magazines, scouring ads for Bruce stuff. But searching for records didn't bring me in touch with the Springsteen community, so I decided to do a magazine and give it away at the upcoming concert.

I called up several Seattle radio stations and tried to convince them to buy ads, but they all turned me down. Then the promotions director at one (Janet Wainwright at KZOK) called me back and said they'd be willing to put up \$200 (which was about half the cost of printing), and I knew it was a go. They'd get their logo on the centerspread poster, plus an ad asking people to call the station after the show to give their own review. It was one of the few ads we'd sell in our entire 15-year history.

The first issue had the tagline "Seattle's Bruce Springsteen newspaper" and I really can't tell you what I was thinking with that. Maybe I assumed that so many other people in Seattle would be excited about Bruce that I could do this every time he came to town (and perhaps every town would one day have their own Bruce Springsteen newspaper). With my enthusiasm for Springsteen, I thought a magazine strictly about him, and his style of Jersey Shore music—let's

not forget Southside, Steven, etc.—would find a large Seattle audience. Boy, was I wrong.

On that night in October of 1980, I couldn't even find anyone to help me hand out the damn thing. My girlfriend at the time and her sister helped for a while but they got sick of standing in the drizzle and went into the hall. So there I was with stacks of freshly printed *Backstreets* and it seemed that only every tenth person was interested in taking even a free newspaper. Some people—drunk at the time, I guess—threw the mag back in my face. I remember after the line had filtered into the venue, I looked down and saw hundreds of copies of the issue balled-up, trashed, and strewn on the ground. I had a huge stack left, which I finally just threw in the trash can and walked into the concert, a little less emotionally sure of myself than I had been several hours earlier. And that was the beginning of *Backstreets* magazine, 15 years ago, 50 issues ago, many moons past.

It wasn't until about six months later that I tackled another issue, this time giving it more pages. A few people wrote me from the East Coast asking about it and soon I started up pen pal correspondences with about 50 people from over the world who would regularly get long letters from me along with their individually hand-addressed issue of *Backstreets*. Subscriptions were offered after about a year (a fellow named Mike Clark from Salem, Oregon was the first subscriber) and it slowly grew from there. Our publishing schedule has always been somewhat erratic—determined as much by what Bruce is up to as by regularity of frequency—and it was even more irregular in the first couple of years. What many people don't know is that the entire time I've done *Backstreets*, I've had another "normal" full-time job, so this has always been a labor of love for me. Over the last several years, through the contributions of

people like Chris Phillips, Erik Flannigan, James Halada, Lisa Pritchard, Jon Pont, and Bob Santelli, *Backstreets* has reflected as much the contributors' voices as mine. At times the magazine has had more enthusiasm for Bruce's work than I did.

Yet when I look back on what we've created with this magazine—and honestly we've only created it with the support of the subscribers, SuperSubs, and readers like yourself—it is truly a remarkable accomplishment. Fanzines usually last for a few months, put out a handful of issues and then fade away when the founders get too involved with something else. Few magazines of any sort—even those put out by Time Warner—last more than a few years. *Thunder Road*, which was the original Springsteen fanzine and an inspiration and guide for this effort, published only six issues—though it made an impact on me. Other than the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Elvis, I can't think of other artists with such a loyal fan base and such a long-lived fanzine.

Most fanzines in the U.S. are done by the artists' management and these almost universally suck since they read like press releases. The better ones are done by fans with some help from management (like U2's excellent *Propaganda*, which recently came with a free CD of otherwise unreleased material). Many fanzines in Europe survive because bootlegs can be sold openly, and the fanzine audience makes a lucrative market to sell to there. At least one overseas Bruce fanzine comes with a bootleg CD attached, an option we simply don't have here in America (and that they may not have overseas much longer with laws on copyright changing rapidly). Despite our longevity, *Backstreets*, the magazine, has always been a money-loser and what allows us to stay in operation is the official merchandise we sell (and that Bruce makes licensing royalties

from). Through our alter-ego of Backstreet Records, we have tried to make quality official records, books and t-shirts available by mail and to carry many of the items an official fan club would carry. Your support of that operation has helped preserve the admittedly strange magazine you hold in your hands.

To quantify what 15 years of *Backstreets* means, here's a few figures for you to consider: That's 1788 pages of *Backstreets* (stacking all the issues together would give you a pile ten inches high), more pages and more total Bruce Springsteen information than all the books published on Bruce by major book publishers. Over the course of the last 15 years, over half a million copies of *Backstreets* magazine have been printed (including those trashed copies of #1 that became Seattle Center garbage and a few boxes of #21 still sitting my basement).

Let's consider Bruce's career during this period, since that will give you an idea of how I respond to the question that non-Bruce Tramps most frequently ask ("How do you find enough stuff to write about?"): Since 10/23/80, Bruce Springsteen has performed 672 concerts, including official shows, guest appearances and club dates. Almost 200 of those performances have been in clubs and have been unannounced, and most go unreported, except in the pages of *Backstreets*. Averaging out those shows and figuring that for each one Bruce is probably onstage for 2.5 hours—the short club shows take the average down—there have been something like 1,680 hours of Bruce Springsteen performance since *Backstreets* began. I'd make a guess that 1,500 hours are on tapes in my friend Mark's basement. Looking at only the official concerts, 473, Bruce has played 391 different songs in concert during that period. Even by my admittedly cranky analysis, 350 of those 473 concerts were shows to die for (leaving out pretty much all of the HT/LT tour).

Looking at official albums, since *Backstreets* began Springsteen has released 10 albums (including *GH*, *Live*, and *Plugged*). That equals 149 official cuts on albums, plus the over three dozen non-Bruce-album releases on benefit albums, b-sides, com-

pilations, and imports. That's why you probably have a shelf somewhere in your house that begins with "S" and goes on for two feet at a minimum.

In 1980, when *Backstreets* started, not a single Bruce Springsteen bootleg compact disc existed. And though there were vinyl bootlegs back in 1980, the number of Springsteen titles only approached 100. At this point, the sheer number of bootleg releases defies anyone to even count them or keep track. Almost every one of those 672 concerts since *Backstreets* began has been captured on tape, if not reproduced on digital compact disc bootlegs.

And now, of course, we add to those numbers the 15-date, small, acoustic tour that Springsteen begins the week after I finish these words. Like every other Springsteen fan in America, my fingers are sore from dialing so many times this past weekend, trying to beat the odds and come up with tickets. I struck out, though I hope to see a show.

One of the things that gives me the most pride about our accomplishment of 50 issues is that *Backstreets* has always reflected the passion of the editors and contributors. It's also been honest and opinionated. That's not the case with most artist-sponsored fanzines, and it's not always even the case within the normal rock press, which can lack passion and be mired in politics. We've said it before, and we'll say it again here, this magazine is for Springsteen fans, not for Bruce himself, or his management, or his record company.

There's both good and bad about having no official relationship with the artist. That means that we get no easier access to tickets than any other fans (though, like other magazines, we sometimes get press tickets), but it also assures you that what you'll read here is not from insiders or those on the payroll. Though there are some people within "the organization," and within the record company, who have been very helpful to our efforts—and who feel, like we do, that a serious, music-focused magazine like *Backstreets* is an honor to Springsteen's work, whether he or his management think so or not—we operate without the privilege that insid-

ers have. What you read here, we hope, is the voice of the Springsteen fan community.

As part of that community, I have to admit tremendous disappointment with how the ticket distribution was handled for the first 15 dates of the solo tour. At a time when groups like Pearl Jam and U2 are making strident efforts to get tickets into the hands of their loyal audience, I heard too many stories this weekend of scalpers taking over lines and of fans getting shut out. It disappoints me that an artist like Springsteen, and his management, couldn't have done more to make ticket distribution fair and to recognize longtime fans who have waited for this tour for years. As one of my Bruce buddies told me (by phone, from Alaska no less), "I've waited to see this for years. Guess I'll be waiting longer."

There are many more equitable ways to distribute tickets to fans than the Ticketmaster system, which in big cities is largely corrupt and unfair. Too many tickets in Los Angeles and New York don't even go on sale to the public and instead go directly into the hands of scalpers. Whether they are legal brokers (in cities that allow this crap) or illegal scalpers, it all means the same to me: The rich can afford tickets and the regular fans get screwed.

Other rock groups have begun to fight this corrupt system. Pearl Jam, for one, issue tickets to their fan club first, before any others get a chance. *Backstreets* has previously offered to help distribute tickets, but that's a request Bruce's organization has not taken up. But even without distribution to a fan club base, there are plenty of other options that could have been considered.

They include measures such as putting tickets on sale the night before the show, which doesn't give scalpers time enough to advertise tickets but still is enough time to fill a small hall with local Bruce fans; or selling reservations over the phones and only allowing admission with the I.D. the ticket was bought under (kills scalping instantly). In this age of computer technology, there are systems to print the name or picture of the buyer on

each ticket. Guns 'N' Roses, a band without the kind of reputation that Springsteen carries, organized a system for a club show where fans called in and ordered tickets on the phone. No physical tickets were issued, though a reservation was held at the box office and with I.D. you and a guest could enter. Scalpers get defeated by this because they don't want to see the shows, they want to sell tickets for top dollar and go home. Even a system that limits the outlets (say either make all phone orders go to one central office, or sell tickets at only one or two outlets) helps since limiting the outlets means you can police the sales better.

Lotteries have also worked in the past to defeat scalping, and Springsteen's organization has used the lottery system before. I'd be much happier entering

There must be a more equitable way to distribute tickets than the current system where the rich can afford scalped tickets and the regular fans take their chances.

(and losing) a mail-order lottery, than knowing, as I do today, that in most major markets scalpers got some of the best seats. A lottery is an easy system to put together and creates excitement and press attention.

Alternative ticket delivery systems might require more work, but other acts have managed. Scalpers in New York City were calling these recent shows an example of "Christmas coming early this year" because the panic around tickets created a seller's market. Springsteen's organization could also hire extra security guards to bust scalpers outside of arenas and get the message out that scalping won't be tolerated. In the past, this issue was important enough to Bruce that he talked about scalping onstage—and even debated whether to play shows in cities

Continued page 8

New album, acoustic tour

Solo Tour: 41,562 seats

By Charles R. Cross

After a couple of years of hibernation, the Bruce bear is running wild again and this time it's the real thing and not a crew member in a rubber suit. Bruce Springsteen is back. Of course, most fans know he never left, but count on the rest of the world to notice.

On Nov. 21 in the U.S. Springsteen released his thirteenth album and on that same day he began his first ever solo, acoustic tour in New Brunswick, NJ. The album, titled *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, debuted to mostly rave reviews but the solo tour was what had many fans so excited. That was until tickets went on sale on Saturday, Nov. 18. This first leg of the solo tour takes in just 15 dates in nine cities, all in halls under 4,000 seats—venues Bruce hadn't played in almost 20 years. Only 41,562 seats were available for the entire tour, less people than saw any one night of the last stadium tour.

Though only 15 shows were announced in the U.S., a few others might be added—the two New Jersey shows were only announced four days before they happened and two days before

tickets went on sale—but no one expects this to be a long tour. Several sources close to Springsteen said they expected Bruce to finish the solo tour soon and then go back into the studio in the spring to do a record with the E Street Band. There is speculation of a summer 1996 tour, perhaps reunited with the E Streeters, but at the moment that's just rumor.

The Ghost of Tom Joad is the solo record that Springsteen has been working on for over a year now. Bruce cut demos for this record last fall, took a break to work on *Greatest Hits*, and then went back to work on this album in his home studio. The record was finished up late in the summer but it wasn't until September that the decision was made to push for a Christmas release.

Like the new album, the solo tour is stripped down and spare. Springsteen began rehearsing for the tour in early November in Red Bank, NJ, and by the week before the first show, the set had stretched out to three plus hours. The length of the show might explain why promoters at first announced an opening act for the tour—an unprecedented move for Springsteen, who hasn't

had an opening act since 1974—then later said the opener was off. The planned opener, the well-respected John Wesley Harding, was still scheduled as an opener for the Berkeley show, though plans might change before our press date.

Many fans were disappointed that the solo tour took in so few cities. There was some speculation that a second leg would be added to take in other markets and a source also had Bruce playing in Red Bank the last week in December. A leg of the tour in Europe, to begin in February, was almost certain, with dates discussed in London, Barcelona, Amsterdam, and Berlin. Another trip to Europe before the end of the year, simply for interviews and promotion, was also being considered.

As if the album and tour wasn't enough, Springsteen remained involved with movies, writing tracks for two new soundtracks and appearing in a documentary. *Blood Brothers* is a documentary filmed during the making of *Greatest Hits* that may show soon in the U.S., either in theaters or on cable. The film includes three new, previously unreleased songs: "Without You,"

"High Hopes," and "Back in Your Arms Again." Additionally, Springsteen provided the title song to the upcoming Tim Robins film, *Dead Man Walking*, due out in January. And finally, there's the track "Missing," from the Sean Penn movie *The Crossing Guard*, which opened in select U.S. cities in December. ➔

SOLO TOUR

- 11/21 New Brunswick, NJ
The State Theater
- 11/22 Red Bank, NJ
The Count Basie Theater
- 11/26-27 Los Angeles, CA
The Wilshire Theater
- 11/29-30 Berkeley, CA
Berkeley Community Theater
- 12/3 Chicago, IL
The Rosemont
- 12/5-6 Washington, D.C.
Constitution Hall
- 12/8-9 Philadelphia, PA
The Tower Theater
- 12/12-13 New York, NY
The Beacon Theater
- 12/15-16 Boston, MA
The Orpheum

ON THE BACKSTREETS Continued from page 7

where scalping was legal—but this time around scalpers won, and Springsteen fans lost.

Back when *Backstreets* began—those 15 long years ago—Springsteen tickets were also hard to get, so perhaps the new world order is a return to the way it used to be. Many of the hardcore Bruce audience first met because we were trying to get tickets in other cities, and wanted to make connections with fans rather than scalpers. And those arenas were tiny too, at least up through the *Darkness* tour. I thought the days of seeing Bruce Springsteen in Seattle's Paramount Theater were over, but maybe not. There's always a pos-

sible second leg of the solo tour to wait for, always another rainy night when rock 'n' roll is just the ticket. Assuming, of course, that you can get tickets in the first place.

* * *

BUSINESS STUFF: After a long wait, here is our 15th Year Anniversary Issue. Since this issue is a double one, some of you may be surprised to realize that your subscription has expired faster than you might have expected. If your mailing label has an "X50" or "X51" above your name, this is the last issue of your current subscription.

Remember, you can renew your subscription at any time and add another four issues to your

total (\$18 for one year in the US and Canada—\$25 overseas—gives you four issues). Subscriptions are also available for two and three year terms (\$30 and \$40 in the US and Canada in US funds; \$42 and \$65 overseas airmail). With postage and paper cost increases, if you renew today you ensure against future price increases, plus you won't have to worry about fading away. Many of the back issues of *Backstreets* are sold out, so you won't want to miss even one. If you began subscribing 15 years ago and renewed every time, you've now got some very valuable back issues on your hands, so don't let Mom recycle them.

During the holiday time of year, remember you can also give

a gift subscription to *Backstreets* (it makes the perfect Xmas gift) and we'll gladly send a card to your friend, noting your name. Simply ask us with your order, or give us a call during December.

Backstreets' newsstand distribution is a little erratic, so please don't let your sub expire—you can't find us at every corner 7-Eleven. If you bought this issue on a newsstand, we hope you consider subscribing and helping support our efforts. We also have a SuperSub program available for those who want the magazine sent first class, plus other added membership benefits. To subscribe, write us at *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115-1225, USA, or you can e-mail us at joeroberts@aol.com. ➔

THE TOUR BEGINS:

11/21/95
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ
STATE THEATER
CAPACITY: 1850

The Ghost of Tom Joad
 Adam Raised A Cain
 Straight Time
 Highway 29
 Darkness
 Murder Inc.
 Nebraska
 If I Should Fall Behind
 Born in the USA
 Dry Lightning
 Spare Parts
 Youngstown
 Sinaloa Cowboys
 The Line
 Balboa Park
 Across The Border

Does This Bus Stop...?
 This Hard Land
 Dead Man Walking
 Galveston Bay
 My Best Was Never...

SET NOTES: The live world premieres of "Straight Time," "Highway 29," "Dry Lightning," "Youngstown," "The Line," "Balboa Park," "Across The Border," "Dead Man Walking," "Galveston Bay," and "My Best Was Never Good Enough." First acoustic version of "Murder Inc." ever.

JON'S COMMENTS: Springsteen thanked the audience for being guinea pigs and noted that this was essentially a rehearsal. It wasn't necessary. Note that all songs from the new album were performed except for "The New Timer." The new songs stood out from the recorded versions. Makes you wonder why he just didn't do 'em live to begin with.

Bruce played twelve-string and slide and harmonica. In addition, there was a keyboard on "Highway 29" and "Galveston Bay" [played by Kevin Buell offstage].

"ML" features a slow, descending melody on guitar that kept me guessing as to what it was. It was introduced as a song about "the cost of doing business." "BUSA" was introduced, too: Bruce talked a bit about the misinterpretation, but said he got to "rewrite the book every night."

"Dead Man Walking" was short, sweet, and to the point. Great song, strong impact. About a man awaiting execution and the title song from the upcoming Tim Robbins movie.

Bruce talked at length tonight about books, immigration, the upcoming presidential election, you name it. He appeared relaxed, fit, and wore no cap to reveal a slicked-back do and receding hairline. Voice clear and strong. He asked after the second song for silence and got it throughout. Aside for some minor "Broooocing," it was silent.

Overall: An A. Bruce Springsteen is again a performer with a vision and a passion for what he's doing. Bruce put a lot of thought into this concert. Despite its dark tones, this is an incredible show with warmth, grace, and range.

—Jon Pont

11/22/95
RED BANK, NJ
COUNT BASIE THEATER
CAPACITY: 1500

SET NOTES: In the second show of the tour, Bruce keeps to the same set with the only differences being "Point Blank" replacing "Nebraska," and "Streets of Philadelphia" replacing "Dead Man Walking." A film crew from "60 Minutes" films Bruce signing autographs after the show.

PETE'S COMMENTS: "Point Blank" was beautiful and sad. At one point Bruce said "At least three quarters of this place tonight are my relatives....I don't know how the rest of you suckers got in!" In fact, Patti was sitting in the 5th or 6th row with their three kids. I guess it was the kids' first real concert by their Dad.

Bruce prefaced "BUSA" by saying that since he wrote it, people keep telling him it is misunderstood, but that it sold a lot more records than any of his previous stuff, so what does that tell him? Then he went into a bluesy, gutsy, raw version during which he uttered the infamous "Born in the USA" phrase only twice. It was very dramatic, and succeeds in returning the song to him.

After "Does This Bus Stop...?", he said that song was the reason he never took any hallucinogenics, because he was already "out there" somehow. "This Hard Land" was dedicated to Little Steven.

During "Streets of Philadelphia," some idiots began clapping. Bruce tolerated it until the song was over, and then said "I knew there was a reason I did that song with a band." Then he said (with a smile on his face),

"And I told you about that fucking clapping...."

Some bonehead kept shouting "You the man!" Probably the same guy who was trying to start a clap-along during "Streets of Philadelphia." Bruce didn't acknowledge him, but this guy was also at the State Theater. I really hope he's not going to any more shows. If you happen to sit next to this idiot, please set him straight.

—Pete Rizzuto

11/26-27/95
LOS ANGELES, CA
WILTERN THEATER
CAPACITY: 2300

SET NOTES, 11/26: Same set as 11/21 in New Brunswick. The crowd included Patti, Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson, Lyle Lovett, Michelle Pfeiffer, Jim Carrey, Dustin Hoffman, and Jackson Browne. Crowd was the quietest of the tour to date with Bruce noting, "boy you suckers really are quiet." **11/27:** Same set as 11/21 with one exception. "If I Should Fall Behind" was not played; instead Bruce premiered a new tune titled "It's the Little Things That Count." In the audience: Helen Hunt, Danny Devito, Rhea Perlman, Sean Penn, Jason Alexander, Henry Winkler, Rob Lowe, and Bob Dylan.

TICKETS: Hard to come by and scalpers were selling counterfeits. Several people paid big bucks for counterfeits and were turned away at the door. One concert-goer says they saw an usher from the theater coming out of the hall and handing off tickets to a scalper several times during the evening.

JOEL'S COMMENTS, 11/26: Two of the most moving parts of the show came before it even began. When Tom Hanks came into the theater, the crowd applauded. He made a gesture to the crowd and sat down. A few minutes later Nils Lofgren came into the hall and the crowd also gave him a hand—a move I thought was quite touching and honorable.

DAVID'S COMMENTS, 11/26: Bruce pulled this one off because he was so focused. This was my dream come true because of how quiet the crowd was. Apart from a couple of yahoos here and there, I've never seen a Springsteen audience listen as closely. And Bruce, who was in a good mood, clearly appreciated it. The

sound was superb, making the Bridge show just a bad memory. "Does This Bus Stop..." was the most rockin' thing of the night and people were really into it. **11/27:** This seemed like even a better show to me. He really nailed "Born in the USA" and "Does This Bus Stop."

11/29-30/95
BERKELEY, CA
BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATER
CAPACITY: 3,491

SET NOTES, 11/29: Same set as 11/27. The crowd included Clarence Clemons, Ed Bradley, Dave Pirner, Winona Ryder, and Mrs. Adele Springsteen. Bradley interviewed Springsteen afterward for future broadcast on *60 Minutes* along with live footage shot at the New Brunswick show. **11/30:** Same set as 11/27, with one exception. Springsteen played the live world premiere of "The New Timer," making this show the longest yet and the first with every song from *GOTJ*. John Wesley Harding opened both shows.

12/3/95
CHICAGO, IL
ROSEMONT THEATER
CAPACITY: 4300

SET NOTES: Same set as 11/30. Reportedly the rowdiest crowd of the tour so far, with a surprising number of flashbulbs going off in the crowd. Springsteen—who had photographers with photo passes ushered out after one song in Berkeley—was noticeably distracted. ➔

As we go to press, there continues to be talk of a series of shows at the end of the year back in New Jersey, either at the Count Basie or the State Theater in New Brunswick (or both). *Backstreets* #52 will include complete coverage of the U.S. leg of the tour, as well as readers' comments on *The Ghost of Tom Joad*. We've set up a special e-mail address for your comments on the new album and tour only, which we'll run in the next issue: iamtomjoad@aol.com. We also welcome comments, reviews, press, ticket stubs, etc. by mail or fax (206-728-8827). Special thanks to everyone who's kept us posted on the tour so far—the help we receive from readers is essential.

Hungry Heart: Berlin '95

Album number 13 for Bruce Springsteen, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, may mean bad luck for collectors. Springsteen's first album of all new material in over three-and-a-half years is obviously big news for Bruce fans, but the new record may not produce many collectibles. Several fans reported asking Springsteen what the first single would be, to which he replied, "It's not that kind of thing" or "It ain't like that at all." Indeed, the songs on *Tom Joad* don't seem to be radio-friendly, and there was no single released to radio in advance.

According to a Sony representative, there will be no worldwide singles, but record companies in each country will be free to release singles on their own after February. So it remains to be seen: The stylistically similar *Nebraska* had no singles issued in the U.S., but highly sought-after singles from overseas included a non-LP b-side and unique picture sleeves.

For the time being, this year's *Greatest Hits* record is still providing enough to keep collectors busy. The most notable release in recent months has been the "Hungry Heart" single in Germany. The CD5 contains four new b-sides, including the version of "Hungry Heart" that was recorded at the Berlin video shoot for the song this past July. Rounding out the disc are three songs from Bruce and the E Street Band's performance at Sony Studios in April: "Streets of Philadelphia," "Murder Incorporated," and "Thunder Road." It should be noted that this is the second officially released live version of "Murder Inc." (the live take released on various "Secret Garden" singles was taken from the 2/21/95 Tramps show), and the first official E Street version of "Streets of Philadelphia."

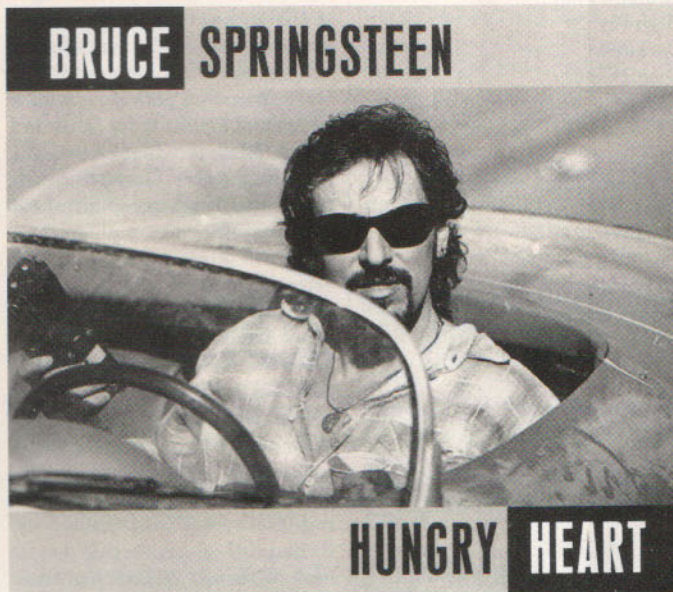
To add to the oddity of this release, the new version of "Hungry Heart" is a new vocal take over the old backing track—presumably why this version is listed

as "Berlin '95" as opposed to "live." Reports from Berlin's Cafe Eckstein suggest that the backing track was playing through the monitors so that the musicians could hear it; although the musicians onstage were playing, it was unclear to some in the crowd whether they were actually hearing the live band or the pre-recorded track. Bruce's live vocal was unquestionable, though, and that is what distinguishes the "Berlin '95" track.

A promotional box for "Hungry Heart" was issued as well, which has proven to be a prized collectible. The promo box contains the CD, a booklet, and a video cassette compiling the official "Hungry Heart" clip, an alternate take, and other footage from the video shoot.

Although it originally sounded like a Germany-only project, the "Hungry Heart" single was released in other European countries as well, including Holland. A CD5 was also released in the UK, but the number of tracks was reduced to four (leaving off "Murder Incorporated"). While that UK CD may be of less interest, collectors should take note of another UK issue of "Hungry Heart" in the form of a seven-inch picture disc. The record has the studio version of "Hungry Heart," with "Streets of Philadelphia" from Sony Studios on the flipside. An off-stage photo from the Berlin video shoot on the a-side shows Springsteen hunkered down by a railing, while the b-side uses the shot of Bruce in a convertible also used for the CD5's picture sleeve. A limited edition run of 7500, the disc comes packaged in a clear sleeve with blue and red type, along with a numbered insert card.

Other formats of singles from *Greatest Hits* continue to surface. A Japanese six-track CD-EP is the best "Secret Garden" package yet. The Japanese release comes with obi and booklet, with a green-tinted cover photo. In addition to the studio title track, the CD collects the most inter-



Bruce takes tricorder readings on the "Hungry Heart" picture sleeve.

esting b-sides from the other "Secret Garden" single configurations—"Secret Garden" (string version), "Murder Incorporated" (live), "Thunder Road" (live), and "Pink Cadillac" (studio)—and adds "Roulette." "Roulette" has been available on CD before, though on such difficult-to-track-down releases as the Dutch "One Step Up" CD3 and the promotional U.S. "Tunnel of Love Express Tour" CDs.

As in the U.S., "Secret Garden" was released as a seven-inch in Holland, backed with "Thunder Road" (live). In Holland, however that was only one of several seven-inch singles from *Greatest Hits*, all issued with picture sleeves: "Murder Incorporated" b/w "Because the Night" (live) and "Hungry Heart" b/w "Streets of Philadelphia" (live) were released as well; these two were also found as Dutch CD5s in cardboard sleeves. Adding to the barrage of configurations from Holland were twelve-inch vinyl singles, with picture sleeves, of "Secret Garden" plus three, and "Murder Incorporated" plus three.

"Secret Garden" was released as a single in France, in both the twelve-inch and CD5 format,

distinguished from other releases by their unique picture sleeve. These French singles utilize a full color Neal Preston shot of Springsteen from the "Secret Garden" video shoot. Another unique picture sleeve accompanied the release of "Secret Garden" in Brazil, a promotional issue with an all-type sleeve.

When it rains, it pours: It's unusual enough to have new singles released from Springsteen's last album so close to the street date of his new one; in addition to *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, Columbia is planning another release containing Springsteen material to hit stores around the same time. The label is releasing a two-CD set of excerpts from September's Concert for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. A track listing is unavailable as we go to press, but Bruce's inclusion is virtually guaranteed.

While a single has yet to be released from *American Babylon*, Joe Grushecky's new Springsteen-produced album on Razor & Tie in the U.S., there is a related promotional CD worth tracking down. Issued by the Pittsburgh artist's UK label, the *In Conversation* disc captures dialogue between Springsteen and

Grushecky, talking about their collaboration. The album itself, features Springsteen's most intense involvement on an outside project since his work with Gary U.S. Bonds. In addition to producing the record and co-writing two songs ("Homestead" and "Dark and Bloody Ground"), Springsteen plays guitar on eight of the record's 12 songs. Patti Scialfa contributes vocals on one track, and Springsteen is also credited for keyboards, harmonica, and mandolin.

For more of Springsteen in conversation, a new interview CD has come out in the UK on the Telltales label. A picture disc housed in a slimline jewelcase, the Telltales disc contains a 41-minute interview from 1978. Not surprisingly, the picture on the disc itself is from Springsteen's '92-93 tour, but the interview is worth a listen.

Springsteen's two Christmas songs, "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" and "Merry Christmas, Baby" have shown up as b-sides as well as on various Columbia promotional samplers such as *Sampler Claus*. Hardly a holiday season goes by without a new format for one of these tunes. Until this year, however, only "Merry Christmas, Baby" has been on a commercially available compilation. Columbia's recent *Christmas of Hope* CD rectifies the situation by including "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," with proceeds going to benefit City of Hope charities.

Italy's Totem Records has released *For You: A Tribute to Bruce Springsteen*. Produced by Follow That Dream's Ermanno Labianca, *For You* consists of 17 artists, covering Springsteen compositions. The contributing artists are largely Italian—though relocated U.S. soccer star Alexi Lalas adds two tracks—and include such artists as Luca Barbarossa, Rossana Casale, and Marco Conidi & the Rocking Chairs. Two songs, "Factory" and "One Step Up," have been translated into Italian, while the remaining 15 tracks are sung in English.

For his late fall tour of Europe, Southside Johnny put together a CD himself specifically to sell at the shows. Entitled *Ruff Stuff*, the



self-released CD is a seven-track acoustic EP, sort of a preview of the upcoming record he's been working on in the studio. Six of the songs are acoustic demos of new songs, including "Rosa," which has received particular raves; the album also contains "Into the Mystic" from the 1993 Hungerthon broadcast. *Ruff Stuff* is available in Europe only, and word has it there were only 1000 copies pressed.

While Little Steven fans await the two new records he has in the works, "Time of Your Life," his first new recording in several years, is available on the *Nine Weeks* soundtrack. According to reports, the song was also issued on a CD5 in the UK.

Nils Lofgren has released a new studio album entitled *Damaged Goods*. The record is on the Pure label in the US and on Castle in Europe. In addition, *Chronicles*, a two-CD Lofgren collection, was released by A&M.

Ronnie Spector's recordings with Springsteen and the E Street Band have previously been available on vinyl singles only, which, besides their rarity, command relatively steep prices on the collector's market. Fans who just want the music can now check out *Dangerous 1976-1987*. A set compiling work from Spector's later years, *Dangerous*

includes the E Street material and is available as an import from the UK. A U.S. release is also possible.

Springsteen fans and collectors have sought out Sesame Street's *Born to Add* LP for its hilarious cover art (a muppet parody of the *Born to Run* cover) and "Born to Add" by Bruce Springsteen and the S Street Band. Look for a recent Sony reissue on CD and cassette (though for pure cover impact, you can't beat the LP). Another bit of interesting miscellany, Rhino's *Rerun Rock* is a various-artists compilation of television theme songs performed "in the style of some of rock 'n' roll's greatest stars." With this novelty album's inclusion of "Bedrock Rap/(Meet) The Flintstones," Rhino brings the Bruce Springsteen parody material fully into the digital age. Rhino released "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," the b-side of the original Springstone single, on a recent compilation CD of baseball songs. —Christopher Phillips

the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen
The Ghost of Tom Joad
Columbia (LP)

2. Rocket From the Crypt
Scream, Dracula, Scream!
Interscope (CD)

3. Bruce Springsteen
"Back in Your Arms Again"
From *Blood Brothers* (video)

4. Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers
American Babylon
Razor & Tie (CD)

5. Emmylou Harris
Wrecking Ball
Elektra/Asylum (CD)

6. Ben Folds Five
Ben Folds Five
Passenger/Caroline (CD)

7. Superchunk
Here's Where the Strings Come In
Merge (CD)

8. Bruce Springsteen
"Hungry Heart" import single
Columbia (CD5)

9. Lori Carson
Where It Goes
Restless (CD)

10. Son Volt
Trace
Warner (LP)

10
Monster
Discs to Play Today
and Everyday

OLIPS

FROM THE BEYOND:

Bruce Springsteen's recent flurry of activity will have come as no surprise to those who follow the stars. Back in June, the astrology column of the *Sunday Houston Chronicle* wrote, "A peek into the life of Libra rocker Bruce Springsteen, who certainly doesn't need to work for money, shows that his Mars and Pluto in performing sign Leo will start nudging him back to work as Pluto gains momentum in Sagittarius. The Boss will be inspired to travel the world with a message for a cause." It looks like he'll be traveling the world soon, and Bruce has been associated with several good causes these days, too. In addition to the Bridge Benefit and the first two Jersey benefit shows that kicked off his solo tour, there was a Walden Woods dinner and auction, where a Bruce-signed Stratocaster went for \$12,500, and a half-hour guitar lesson with Springsteen himself went for a whopping sum of \$13,000. . . . Also, New York station 92.3 FM K-ROCK teamed up with World Hunger Year again for the sixth annual Hungerthon. The t-shirt, available with a contribution of \$50 or more, has an illustration that reads "Everybody's Got a Hungry Heart" plus Bruce's printed signature; \$75 or more gets the sweatshirt. Contact: World Hunger Year, 505 Eighth Avenue, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10018.

THE E STREET DANCE:

Roy Bittan recently helped out on Bob Seger's new one, *It's a Mystery*, playing on three songs, "By the River," "Manhattan," and "Wonder." . . . Garry Tallent has formed D'Ville Records along with engineer Tim Coats and Meridian label-head Ron Lasalle. The Nashville-based D'Ville label has one release slated for this fall, and six more for '96. . . . Fans of Southside will want to take note of a new unofficial Southside Johnny web page: <http://pease1.sr.unh.edu/1/southside>. There's also now a Southside mailing list on the Internet available by e-mailing "majordomo@ici.net" with "subscribe southside" in the body. E-mail list administrator Debbie May

with any questions: dmay@ici.net. . . . Elliott Murphy fans in cyberspace may want to check out the "Reflections on the Fog" electronic mailing list. Send e-mail (with "subscribe reflections on the fog" in the body) to: Poisenpen@aol.com. . . . The next *Backstreets* will feature an article on all the various Bruce web pages out there, so if you've started one recently, make sure we know about it (in cyberspace you can reach us at joeroberts@aol.com). At the moment, the largest cyber-Boss mailing list is the ever-popular Luckytown Digest. Send "subscribe luckytown" in the body of your text to: "luckytown-request@netcom.com."

BOOK OF DREAMS:

In the printed world, new editions of Dave Marsh's out-of-print books, *Born to Run* and *Glory Days*, are scheduled for publication from Thunder's Mouth Press in the next couple of months. The books are unchanged except for new brief prefaces from Marsh, but both will use the most up-to-date texts. . . . Springsteen fan Richard Ford's sequel to *The Sportswriter* is titled *Independence Day*. Ford told the *Providence Journal*, "I thought of the Bruce Springsteen song that goes, 'Just say goodbye, it's Independence Day.' To most Americans, I think, to be independent means to have no ties, to be separate, isolated. And as a novelist, what I wanted to do was to recalibrate the word, to see if it was possible to give it an affirming quality. Independence can mean freedom from mistakes, regrets, freedom to go forward together with others." Great book, by the way. . . . In last issue's column we mentioned that *Down Thunder Road* author Marc Eliot would take Kato Kaelin as the subject for his new book. A clip shown on "Later with Greg Kinnear" shed a little more light on how the Eliot-Kaelin pairing came about; apparently Kato knew that Eliot had written *Down Thunder Road* and hoped people might compare him to Springsteen. And hey, isn't that the same Eliot who just co-wrote *Hee-Haw* and *Other Laughing Matters*, a 25-year salute to the longest-running show in television history? Maybe Grampa Jones thought he was born to run, too.



Baby, baby: Amy Grant plants a kiss on her favorite Boss mag.

NO MORE PARTIES:

After over six years, Ruth Kelley announced that she'd no longer be able to keep the Chicago Bruce Party Line going. Kelley's taped Party Line was a popular source of Bruce news for mid-west fans and will be missed. . . . Two Springsteen albums made Mojo's recent list of the 100 greatest albums of all time, with *Born to Run* coming in at #41 and *Darkness on the Edge of Town* at #54. Interestingly, the UK magazine mentioned in passing that *Darkness* was originally entitled *American Madness*, after a 1932 Frank Capra film about the depression, the first time that has ever been reported. . . . And speaking of America, the American Movie Classics channel recently conducted a soundtrack survey, asking viewers, composers and celebrities about their favorite movie music. No, "Streets of Philadelphia" didn't make it, but Springsteen still was among the winners. The song that those surveyed would most like to hear covered by a contemporary artist

was "Singin' in the Rain" by Springsteen. . . . Also on TV, the writers on "Homicide: Life on the Streets" clearly know who's who, as Bruce references keep cropping up. Most recently was an FBI agent named "Miami Steve."

JUKEBOX GRADUATE:

We run our own *Backstreets* Jukebox in every issue, but for the first time we've actually got a Boss Jukebox. We're advocates of respecting privacy and all, but we thought this was too good to pass up. On the night of Joe Grushecky and Springsteen's October Assault at Tramps in New York City, the following CDs were spied in the dashboard disc rack of a certain Ford parked outside the club: George Jones, *Sings Bob Wills*; Best of the Louvin Brothers; Chuck Berry, *The Great 28*; Jerry Lee Lewis, *Sun Greatest Hits*; Everly Brothers, *EB84*; The Flaming Guitars of Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant, *Stratosphere Boogie*; and on the console, and we assume in the player, Elvis Presley, *The Top Ten Hits*. 🍷



Max and Steve join Bruce and Joe

Springsteen rocks the house

By Robert Makin

Greetings from your new "Greetings" columnist. Let me just briefly introduce myself. Having been raised at the Jersey Shore, I've been a Bruce fan for nearly 20 years and I've caught over 15 local club shows. While I was growin' up, my dad was the entertainment editor of *The Asbury Park Press*. He was the one who turned me onto the sounds of Asbury Park when he brought home a review copy of *I Don't Want to Go Home*.

For the past eight years, I've been an editor at *Arts Weekly*, which publishes *The Aquarian Weekly* and *East Coast Rocker*. For both publications, I've interviewed Little Steven, Southside Johnny, Clarence Clemons, Max Weinberg, Garry Tallent, Jon Bon Jovi, among many other Jersey Shore music legends.

Although I've bought him drinks, I've never gotten the opportunity to interview than man who put Asbury Park on the musical map. I did, however, recently get to talk with Joe Grushecky, the Pittsburgh-based roots rocker who's been friends with Springsteen since the late '70s. Joe invited Bruce, Max and Steven to jam with his band, the Houserockers, at Tradewinds in Sea Bright for what turned out to be one of the summer's hottest shows. Grushecky, who at one time recorded for MCA and then Rounder, was warming up for the release of *American Babylon*, his recent Springsteen-produced effort for Razor & Tie.

"I met Joe and his band when they were playing in Pittsburgh," Bruce told the capacity crowd. "I'm glad he got me onstage tonight."

Bruce and Grushecky treated the Tradewinds to the Americana roar of "Dark and Bloody Ground," one of the two songs they co-wrote, as well as *American Babylon's* socially-conscious title track, plus "Darkness on the Edge of Town," "Lucky Town," "Murder Incorporated," and blistering



A triple-threat at Tradewinds, 7/22/95.

jams of the classics "Mustang Sally" and "Gloria."

Grushecky's 12-song CD also features performances by Springsteen, including the co-written "Homestead," a working class anthem that sounds as if it could have been on *Born in the USA*. Judging by the tough, touching music on *American Babylon*, it's easy to see why Bruce became so involved in the project.

It was quite a busy summer in the clubs for Springsteen. The day after the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia died, Bruce happened to be hanging out at Cheers in Long Branch, where a "baby Dead band" called Solar Circus were paying tribute to their late guitar guru.

"Some friends told us Bruce was sitting in the back of the bar," Solar Circus frontman/guitarist Mark Diomedes told *Backstreets*. "So we approached him about jamming with us."

At first Bruce was reluctant, but when he took the stage, he also took Solar Circus by surprise by launching into fiery guitar solos on several of the band's originals. The 45-minute guest appearance ended with a 30-minute free-for-all on the oft Dead-covered Buddy Holly classic, "Not Fade Away."

"He seemed to have a really good time," says Diomedes. "We

weren't aware that Bruce was really into jamming back in his early days. He's better known as a songwriter. It seemed to really take him back."

Bruce had already jammed at Cheers a few days earlier when he threw a birthday party for his wife, Patti Scialfa, during a regular Sunday gig of Asbury Juke guitarist Bobby Bandiera. Southside and Bon Jovi, who played together at the new Camden Waterfront this summer, were among the guests.

"It was a lot of fun, really off-the-cuff," says Bandiera. "Kind of like, 'Let's call Bob and see what he's doing with his night down there. Maybe we can have some fun.'"

"If my girlfriend were a musician who didn't get much chance to play what she writes and sings," Bandiera continues, "I think I'd put something together like that, too. I don't think Patti's ever played her music with a band. Bruce figured it would be a great opportunity to celebrate her birthday by doing that. I was happy that he thought of me for his family thing."

Bobby is quite familiar with Patti's songwriting ability, having penned "Under the Sun" with her for the 1986 Jukes album *At Least We Got Shoes*. Speaking of the Jukes, the band got together with-

out Southside recently to play a benefit for Rick Carlson, a surfer who drowned in the rough waters off the coast of Atlantic City this summer. Carlson, a friend of Juke trumpeter Jim Brady, was one of more than a dozen people who met their untimely death due to the nasty current that ripped through the ocean all season.

The benefit, which also featured the talent of Jersey Shore mainstay John Eddie, was held at Six Shooters in Atlantic City in an effort to raise funds for Carlson's family. The gig marked the first time I've ever heard of Southside not appearing with his band. He apparently just wasn't available.

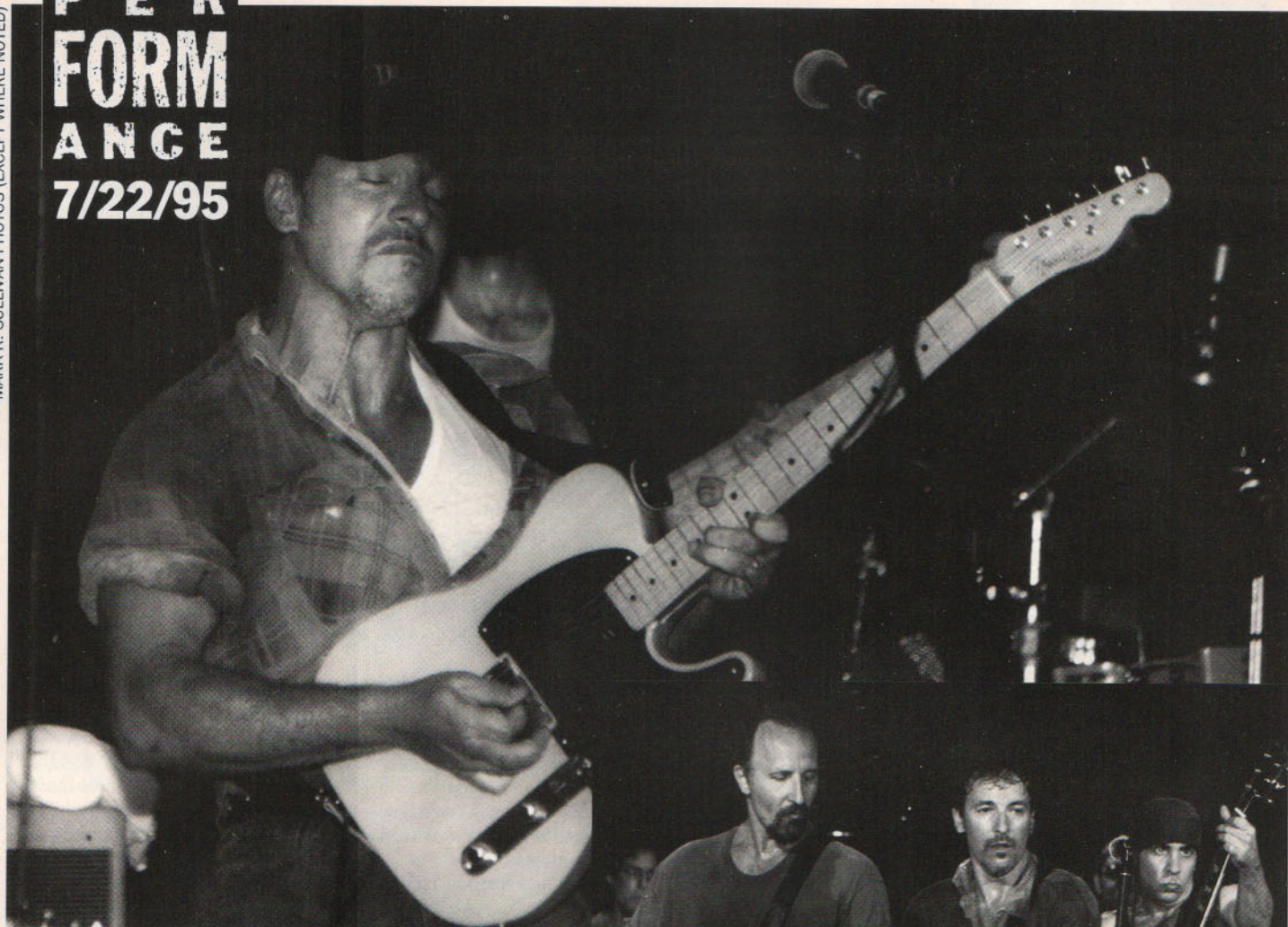
The Blackberry Blues Band, a '90s incarnation of the '70s outfit that evolved into the Asbury Jukes, were one of the many local acts who made the 20th Annual Clearwater Festival of the Monmouth County Friends of Clearwater a phenomenal success. Appearances by folk legends Pete Seeger and Tom Paxton also helped raise a great deal of awareness for the Jersey Shore-based environmental organization.

Most of this column has been dedicated to summer club appearances by Bruce. But I couldn't leave you without sharing this tidbit about a non-appearance told to me by one of the Boss' old cronies. Apparently, Springsteen opted not to attend Max Weinberg's late-summer party at Rum Runners in Sea Bright. Cruising by on his motorcycle, Bruce saw the place was a rumor-zoo, so he kept riding down the street to a pub, where he "bought a drink and found a seat in the corner in the dark."

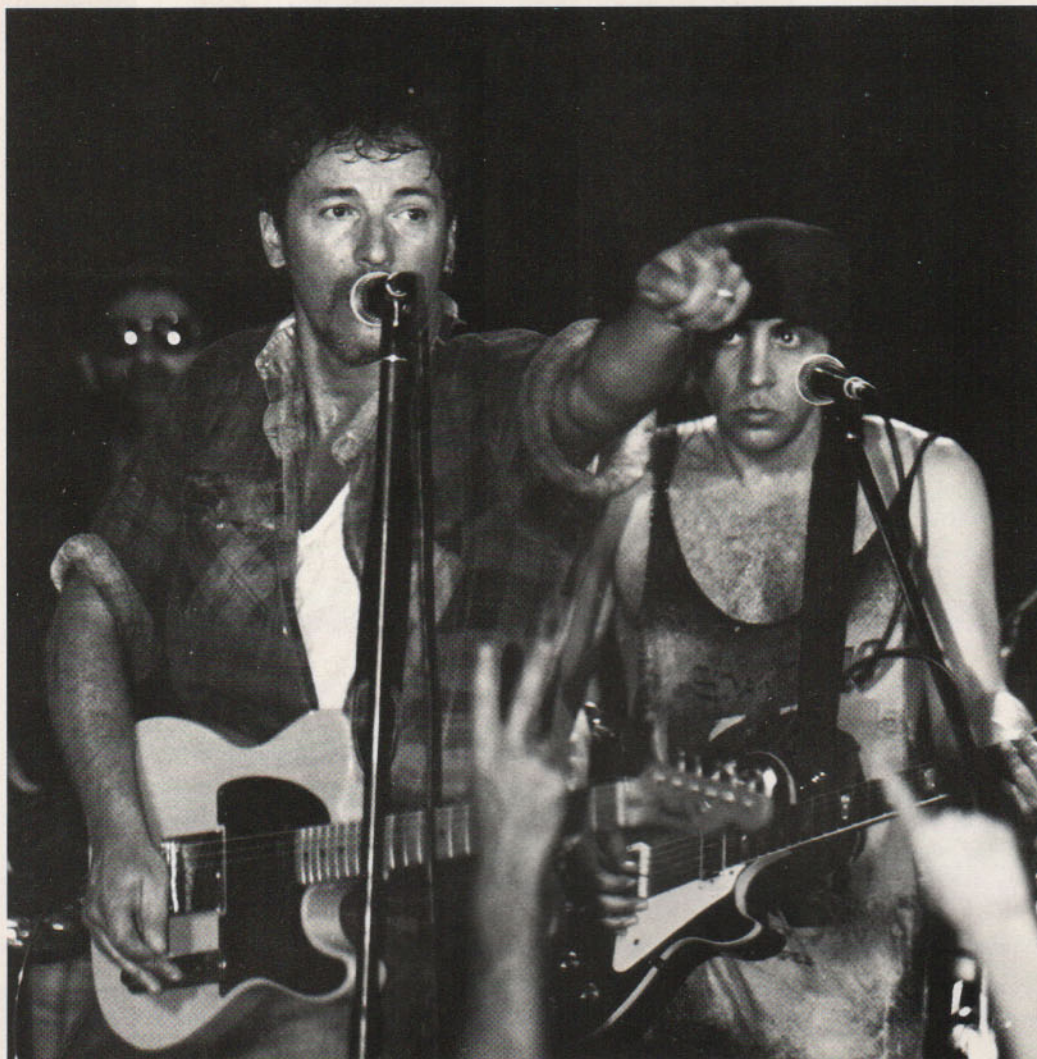
I've just got one last thing to say... thanks to Bob Santelli and *Backstreets* for this wonderful opportunity to share my knowledge and passion about the Asbury park music scene with *Backstreets'* equally enthusiastic readers. Here's to makin' waves with all of you. 🍹

MARK R. SULLIVAN PHOTO

PER FORM ANCE 7/22/95



TED TUCKER PHOTO



TED TUCKER PHOTO

CLUB-HOPPING SUMMER 1995

•7/22/95

Lucky Town
Atlantic City
Never be Enough Time
Labor of Love
Dark and Bloody Ground
Diddy Wah Diddy
Mustang Sally
Murder Incorporated
Darkness on the Edge of Town
What Did You Do in the War
American Babylon
Cadillac Ranch
Pumping Iron, Sweating Steel
Gloria
Ramrod
w/ Joe Grushecky
and the Houserockers
Tradewinds, Seabright, NJ

•8/6/95

unknown
Party w/ Patti Scialfa, Bobby
Bandiera, Little Steven, etc.
Cheers, Long Branch, NJ

•8/10/95

Better Things
Mustang Sally
Stems and Seeds
All Along the Watchtower
Not Fade Away
w/ Solar Circus
Cheers, Long Branch, NJ

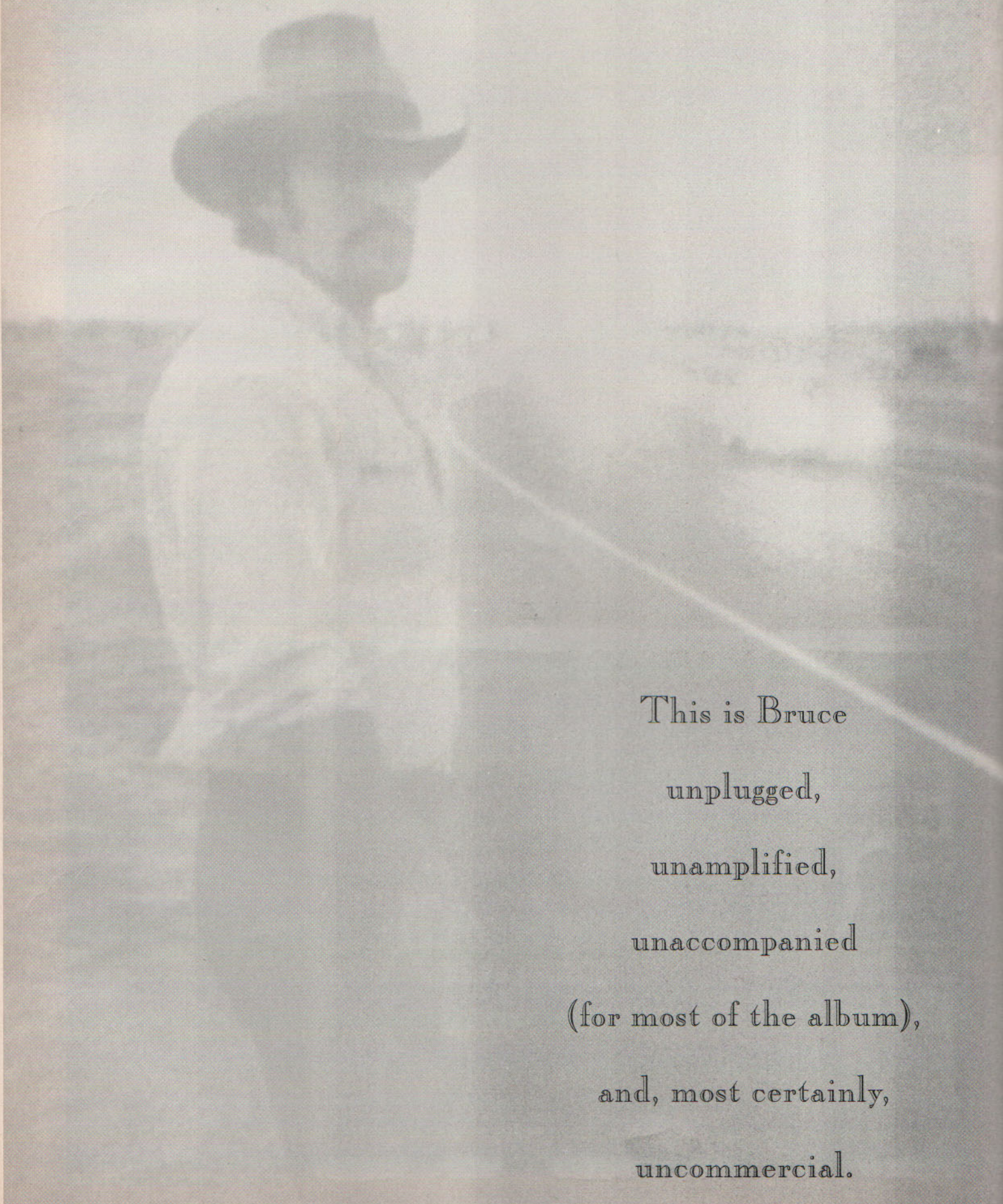
•8/15/95

Long Tall Sally
My Babe
w/ Ronnie Mack
and the Barndance Band
Jack's Sugar Shack, L.A., CA

•9/14/95

All Just to Get to You
w/ Joe Ely
Viper Room, L.A., CA

T H E . G H O S T A N D



This is Bruce
unplugged,
unamplified,
unaccompanied
(for most of the album),
and, most certainly,
uncommercial.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD
 COLUMBIA (CD)

66 **O**ne of the most intimate and uncommercial records ever released by a major rock artist. Hauntingly depressing and deeply personal. Songs deeply rooted in the American experience. Filled with the very same corpses Woody Guthrie wrote about 40 years earlier. So different from the rest of music today that I can't imagine one cut making its way onto the playlist of even the most progressive rock station. Not only is the album all acoustic, most of the songs lack even the simple melodies and riffs that a folk singer like Woody Guthrie brought to a tune."

If the above paragraph sounds like a perfect summation of Bruce Springsteen's thirteenth album, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, consider that I wrote these words thirteen years ago in *Backstreets* #4, in my review of *Nebraska*.

Welcome to the new world order. When it comes to Bruce Springsteen's world, the new order means a new album, a dramatic shift in style, and a new landscape to explore. In a surprising and dramatic departure from his last two albums, Springsteen has put together an acoustic album centered around the American West. Once again the descriptions "stark," "stripped down," and "sparse" describe the sound; the words "dark," "black-and-white," and "story-telling" sum up the lyrics. If the style Springsteen applies on *The Ghost of Tom Joad* sounds familiar, that's because it is—the record at times sounds so much like the mate to *Nebraska* that you can even imagine the two discs packaged together as a set.

If anything, the songs on *Tom Joad* "lack even the simple melodies and riffs" that we find on *Nebraska*—making that 1982 solo album appear almost overproduced in contrast. Springsteen intentionally strips the songs of melody to assure that all focus is on the lyrics. This is Bruce unplugged, unamplified, unaccompanied (for most of the album), and, most certainly, uncommercial. *Nebraska* had "Atlantic City" and "Open All Night," both of which earned considerable FM airplay (despite the dire warning of my review in *Backstreets*) and were released as singles in Europe. As Bruce told fans during the Joe Grushecky tour: "There's no single planned. It's not that kind of record."

So what kind of record is it? Imagine *Nebraska* but with half the songs set within the San Diego county line. If some critics argued that the overly slick production of *Human Touch* represented the influence of California on Bruce's music, wait until they hear this record, which is by far and away the most "Cal-

fornia" album of Springsteen's career (if that state can be turned into an adjective). Like the work of Dave Alvin and Tom Russell, Springsteen uses the California desert and the central valley for his landscape, and it is there we find the characters of *Tom Joad*. Though many of Bruce's standard themes are explored (isolation, desperation, family, ethics, poverty), this time around the darkness on the edge of town has moved from Freehold to Chula Vista.

The change in locale is not the only change in the songwriting. Where every song on *Nebraska* was written in the first person (the singer is the subject of the song), several of the songs on *The Ghost of Tom Joad* are in the third person, with the singer representing the voice of the narrator, not the protagonist. Example: A song like "Highway Patrolman" on *Nebraska* starts off "My name is Joe Roberts," yet three songs on the new album ("Sinaloa Cowboys," "Balboa Park," "Galveston Bay") come in the form of a third person narrative. This further isolates Springsteen from the topics explored, and adds what I imagine is an intentional weariness to the narration.

Though this album shares some sonic qualities with *Nebraska* and explores similar themes (the neighborhood has just moved 3,000 miles west), it is very different from that album if for no other reason than Springsteen's intent. Where *Nebraska* sprang from a life of isolation that Bruce himself led at the time (and that he's talked about in interviews since), *Tom Joad* is not an album about Bruce Springsteen, and for that reason alone it is unlike any Bruce record that precedes it. Like "Streets of Philadelphia," this album represents a deliberate attempt by Springsteen to craft songs through taking on a persona. If his narration at times seems detached, that too is intentional. It is as if Bruce recast himself into his work, not as the character driving the car, but as a reporter telling the story in the back seat. Many

of the social issues explored here have a matter-of-factness about them, as if the songs document a world that cannot easily be explained or ignored. There is a realism to these stories and a foreboding sense of resignation.

If you needed an explanation for where most of Bruce's songwriting has come from in the past, you needed only look as far as his own life. Songs like "Independence Day" and "Walk Like a Man" are highly autobiographical, while *Lucky Town* reads like a private diary. Some reviewers argued that the last two records didn't have the emotional power of Springsteen's earlier work simply because his own life with his family was one filled with happiness and contentment ("My Beautiful Reward"). Even the songs in Springsteen's "big book of lyrics" that weren't autobiographical had some basis in the world that he knew: Several songs on *The River* were inspired by the marriage of a friend, the Vietnam songs were about friends that Bruce grew up with, and the neighborhood songs were about characters he encountered. Following the old adage from creative writing class, Springsteen usually wrote about what he knew. For the most part—and there were exceptions—it wasn't *invention* as much as it was *history*. This also explains why Bruce has attracted so many die-hard followers: They hear his story and they think it is their own.

So whether *Tom Joad* is a success or failure, as an individual record (depending on your own review), is perhaps less important than what it means in terms of Bruce's development as a songwriter. This is the first Springsteen record that comes complete with footnotes: The references at the end of the CD booklet list some of the source materials. They include two stories from the *Los Angeles Times*, one book of photographs, one social history text, and the tremendous John Ford movie "The Grapes of Wrath." No other Springsteen work lists such inspirations (and apart from dance diva Vanessa Daou, who recently did a whole album inspired by an Erica Jong soft-porn novel, I can't think of many examples in popular music with such credits), though Bruce has used source materials before.

Bruce Springsteen will tell everyone that *Tom Joad* is his best album yet (he spoke these very words to a few fans during the Grushecky tour). This is clearly the record he went out to make. Though the difference between being a medium for the work, and being a songwriter who *crafts* the work might seem insignificant, it has huge ramifications in Bruce's career. It also suggests that he intends to continue to have a career as a songwriter long after he has stopped following the adventures of Crazy Janey, Wild Billy and the other characters that we met in the early '70s. We followed this motley crew through the conflict of family and independence (*The River*), through the conflict with authority and an unjust war (*Born in the USA*), through relationships and divorce (*Tunnel of Love*), through family and child-rearing (*Lucky Town*). At least for the time being, their story has ended. *Tom Joad* is not the same saga and one wonders if in the context of Springsteen's writing we will ever revisit Bad Scooter.

The most striking element of *Tom Joad* upon first listen is the intentional repetition of lyrics that have appeared else-

where in Bruce's work. When in the title song Springsteen again sings, "The highway is alive tonight," a line most fans will recognize from "Seaside Bar Song," it is eerie to hear the same lyrics in the context of a different song. Also in this first number are other snippets found in Bruce's past work: a "promised land," "Highway Patrol" choppers, and a character "sittin' down here" in the campfire light. As to why Bruce does this, I can only speculate that it's done to throw us off, to make us look at this new work with new eyes. Our old expectations for what will follow those lines are cast aside, and we are forced to set a new melody to a refrain we already know well. The other obvious example of this technique in Springsteen's catalog is "Thunder Road"/"The Promise," where Bruce took the same chorus but made a new story out of it. And that's very much what *Tom Joad* does: It makes a new story out of old parts, some parts from Springsteen's work, some from Steinbeck, some from Woody Guthrie.

Much like *Nebraska*, this record is haunted by the spirit of Woody Guthrie. Springsteen effectively tells the story here of today's forgotten Americans, specifically the Latinos who struggle to find economic freedom in the United States and end up finding an American dream that doesn't include them. If there is a message in this album—and I would argue there are several—it is that you can find today's Tom Joad down on Alvarado Street, not on Main Street. In today's America, the forgotten and downtrodden are most likely illegal immigrants, left out of a social welfare system because of the happenstance of their birthplace. These songs are their stories, told through a distant narrator, who obliquely recounts their tale without metaphor or editorializing. As such, this is the most socially conscious of all of Springsteen's albums, without being preachy or accusatory the way some protest music comes across. No finger is pointed—not at the Border Patrol officer enforcing

laws he did not draft, not at the johns who pick up the kids in Balboa Park, and not at the kids themselves who are left in an unforgiving world. They turn to drug smuggling, prostitution, and robbery to make any life at all. But there is no high ground in this morally corrupt world. Like Tom Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the characters in *The Ghost of Tom Joad* turn to parts of themselves (murder, stealing) they couldn't imagine before their circumstances changed. It is a sad picture within a nation of plenty, and Springsteen tells the tale simply and with humanity.

Even the design of the album cover adds to the ethereal effect. The only other Springsteen album that didn't come with Bruce's picture on the cover was *Nebraska*, which used a David Kennedy photograph. This time around an impressionistic painting was chosen and what it depicts is unclear. Is the painting supposed to represent the whipped backs of the underclass? Is it a bare-chested man cutting down fields of grain? Is the splattering on his back blood or mud or fingernail scratches? And better yet, who is this man—Elvis or Jesus or Lyle Lovett or one of the characters in the songs? Is this the dead and battered body of Louis from "Sinaloa Cowboys"? It is better that these questions are left unanswered, and this is not

Though many of
Bruce's standard
themes are explored,
this time around the
darkness on the edge
of town has moved
from Freehold to
Chula Vista.

an image—unlike the *Born in the USA* cover—that you can market the way you would a pair of jeans.

If we are to judge *Tom Joad* strictly in terms of the lyric-writing, it is one of Bruce's most powerful albums. Many of the lyrics here rank with Springsteen's best, particularly because of the ability Bruce has to tell a story within the confines of a song. At times it almost seems unimaginable that the same author released songs like "Man's Job" and "Real Man" on his last studio album, but then Springsteen's canon contains many contradictions.

There is genius on this album in the lyric-writing and in the haunting beauty of stripped-down melodies, yet it is still a confusing, and, at times, frustrating album. Though there are several ideas and conflicts that are returned to again and again within the body of the work, some songs seem to belong to other parts of Bruce's career, not to a contemporary California story. And most obviously, upon first listen, the music is nowhere near as ambitious as the lyric-writing. Though the lyrics will send chills up your spine, particularly if you read them, not all the words make the jump successfully into the music of the songs. In his attempt to put the lyrics at the forefront of every song, Springsteen strips away so much of the melody at times that on some songs the music and lyrics compete for attention. The fractured nature of the work ultimately lets it fall short of the standard set by *Nebraska*, despite the lyrical strengths. Like *Nebraska* this album was recorded at such a low volume that you will strain to hear many of the nuances of the lyrics unless you hear it in a controlled environment.

Clearly these were songs written as lyrics on a page and then eventually turned into songs with the addition of guitars, keyboards, and bass. The stark nature of the work is at times too discomfiting, and seems to reflect less a stylistic direction and more an effort to create spoken word poems. These are not tunes you will hum along to in your car. They are highly intellectual songs, almost academic at times. In their deliberate construction, they represent a specific approach that is far away from the free-flowing romanticism of the first few Springsteen albums.

Tom Joad can be divided into two kind of songs musically—five of the 12 tunes feature a backup band filling out the sound, while the other seven songs are simply Springsteen alone on his guitar, playing some background keyboards. If you are to consider the album only on musical terms—and not consider the lyrics—the tunes with the band work better if only because of their tempo and pace. The fullness of a song like "Youngstown" makes me yearn for renditions of all these songs with a small combo behind them. The solo songs are folk music in the Guthrie-tradition, which means they live or die on the quality of the story. If the characters or the stories don't involve you, this will be a difficult record to listen to.

Because of that new folk ethic, this album recasts Bruce in the Americana genre of music, miles away from the pumped-up rock sound most history books list him under. Hardcore fans have always known there was this side to Springsteen, but never has it been so obvious to all-comers. Reports say Springsteen was an admirer of recent albums by Johnny Cash, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, and Joe Ely, and *The Ghost of Tom Joad* will sit well alongside those releases. Within Springsteen's own catalog, it might best be filed between *Nebraska* and *A Vision Shared*, the tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly.

Since this is very much a collection of songs, an examination of each individual tune is in order.

THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD

The title song is one of my favorites on the album and ever since hearing it at the Bridge concert it has been replaying itself in my head. At one point in the *Blood Brothers* documentary, Springsteen refers to the "dark cloud kinda sound" that he uses in much of his work and "The Ghost of Tom Joad" has that sound all over it. Like the best of Bruce's work, the chorus is instantly memorable and dominates the song. Musically driven by the bass and the harmonica, this is one of the most fleshed-out songs on the album, one of the few songs where the music is up to the standard of the lyric-writing.

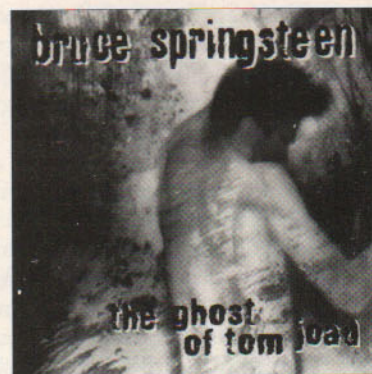
"The Ghost of Tom Joad" can be directly traced back to Woody Guthrie, in terms of theme, style, and inspiration. Springsteen does not so much source the John Steinbeck novel, as he does Henry Fonda's speech in the end of the John Ford movie and Guthrie's own song on the subject (available on the CD release of *Dust Bowl Ballads*.)

According to Joe Klein's biography of Woody Guthrie, Guthrie's version of "Tom Joad" came about because someone at RCA Victor, Woody's label in 1940, asked him to craft a tune around the themes explored in the popular movie based on the Steinbeck novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The result was a 17-verse song that summarizes the story in cinematic detail, set to the music of an old folk song, "John Hardy."

Though Bruce's song references the Guthrie tune, it brings the characters up to date and sets them in the modern California dream. He uses only two lyrical references to suggest that this is the present world: "Highway Patrol choppers" and "sleepin' bags" (Guthrie's vagabonds used blankets). With those minor exceptions, this could be a song about any time in American history.

The first thing a listener notices about "The Ghost of Tom Joad" is how Springsteen re-mines his own past work. First there's the "Highway Patrol choppers" in the third line of the song, reminding you instantly of "Highway Patrolman." Perhaps even more disconcerting is the first line in the chorus: "The highway is alive tonight," (a lyric straight out of "Seaside Bar Song" from 1973). The "highway" lyric also recalls both "Born to Run" and "Racing in the Streets," but unlike those songs—where the highway offers redemption and a way out of town, out of unfortunate circumstance—this road leads nowhere. "But nobody's kiddin' nobody about where it goes," is the next refrain, a pessimism that seems almost personal, as if it is as much about Springsteen's own past work as it is about the characters in this song. The next line, "I'm sittin' down here in the campfire light," is reminiscent of both "Better Days" with "sittin' around waitin' for my life to begin," and "Dancin' in the Dark" with "I ain't getting nowhere just sitting in a dump like this." Characters are frequently "sittin'" in Springsteen songs, though the protagonist of "The Ghost of Tom Joad" does so without rest. On this highway there's not much hope of finding anything other than ghosts and haunted memories.

There are even more references to Bruce's past work in "The Ghost of Tom Joad," a song that seems to be as much



about Bruce Springsteen's canon as it is about poverty in the Southwest. "Got a one way ticket to the promised land," uses the image of the "Promised Land," perhaps the most frequent reference of place in all of Springsteen's work (you'll find a "promised land" in "Darkness on the Edge of Town," "The Price You Pay," "Thunder Road," and, of course, in the song "The Promised Land"). This entire line—word for word—appears in "Johnny Bye Bye."

Musically, "The Ghost Of Tom Joad" uses Danny Federici's keyboards very effectively. Federici knows just how to get the "dark" sound that is at the emotional heart of this tune. Stellar work by Garry Tallent on bass, and *Lucky Town* drummer Gary Mallaber fills out the rhythm section. Pedal steel comes from Marty Rifkin, a well known Hollywood session player.

STRAIGHT TIME

The music is very reminiscent of "Highway Patrolman," and of all the tunes on *Tom Joad*, this particular one would fit in best on the *Nebraska* record, both lyrically and musically. The song tells the story of an ex-con who fights with the desire to re-offend the way an addict fights with an addiction. Springsteen's simple word use in describing the production of a sawed-off shotgun is powerful and chilling. Lyrically this is one of the scariest songs on the album—and one of the most terrifying conflicts that Springsteen has ever written of, the conflict between a moral life and the life of crime. It reads better on the page than it comes across on the album, perhaps because the music is so sparse. The song also lacks a strong chorus, but these musical considerations don't diminish the extraordinary lyrics.

Newcomer Jim Hanson adds bass to this tune and Soosie Tyrell adds violin to fill out the line-up from the first song.

HIGHWAY 29

"Highway 29" is also a song that sounds straight off *Nebraska* and the only musical backing here comes from Springsteen himself. Bruce sings this song with a higher pitch than "Straight Time," in a manner both tender and sweet. His vocals on this song, and on most of *Tom Joad*, are no longer in the hick, country voice of *Greatest Hits*' "This Hard Land," and instead are straightforward and natural.

Were it not for the California locale, this song could be yet another chapter in the saga of Charles Starkweather, the person who inspired "Nebraska." There's also a Bonnie and Clyde feel to "Highway 29," but the true inspiration is not apparent. At the core of the tune though lies an ugly truth, another crime, and a killer on the run.

The ending to this song is quite nice, reminiscent of the way many of the songs on *Tunnel of Love* ended with a slow fade-out. The final image, of a dream that comes right before sleep, is lovely.

YOUNGSTOWN

"Youngstown" is the most fully orchestrated song on the album and it's my favorite from a musical standpoint. If there's any possibility of a single from this album, "Youngstown" would be the most likely choice. I can imagine this fitting in nicely to the formats of Triple A and Americana. Unlike some of the other tunes where Springsteen lets his voice fade off, he propels his vocals here with power, one of the reasons the song is more accessible.

Bruce uses the entire ensemble on this song (with Jim Hanson again on bass) with one new addition: producer Chuck Plotkin on keyboards. There's more drumming here than on the other tunes and more guitar. Yet the standout instrument on this song—and perhaps on the whole album—is the wonderful violin that Soosie Tyrell plays so well. It reminds one of "Factory" and of Scarlet Rivera's contributions to Bob Dylan's '70s work.

Ironically, though "Youngstown" has one of the most engaging melodies on the album, the lyrics—while interesting—lack metaphor and are less detailed than the other tunes on the album. The song tells the story of a man who works the Youngstown, Ohio, mills. There are references to Vietnam, Korea and World War II, and the singer is a Vietnam vet himself as well as a prisoner of the mill. The last verse suggests a darkness not foretold in the rest of the song. When the singer says he'd "not do heaven's work well/I pray the devil comes and takes me/to stand in the fiery furnaces of hell," it's unclear if the mill work has made him part of the devil's army (for creating the weapons of war), or if there are other unstated forces within him (certainly if this character follows in a line from the criminals of "Straight Time" and "Highway 29," one could understand why the devil might be a better match).

Geographically, this song takes us to the other side of the country, back to the Ohio Valley and the familiar terrain of Springsteen's other albums. If Springsteen does tour with Tyrell, look for this to be the highlight of any show.

SINALOA COWBOYS

This is one of two songs that Springsteen wrote for this album inspired by articles in the *LA Times*. The tale of two brothers who get caught up in the drug trade, it bears some resemblance to "Highway Patrolman" and to "Spare Parts" (the final image is similar to "Spare Parts" baptism scene). Springsteen debuted this song in performance at the Bridge Benefit.

Lyrically, this song isn't one of my favorites, perhaps because it sounds too much like a detached news story. There are some lines though that I think work well, particularly "for everything the north gives, it exacts something in return." This is one of seven songs on the record where Springsteen provides all the backing.

THE LINE

The melody of "The Line" bears a striking resemblance to Springsteen's version of "Chimes of Freedom." Thematically, this is the mate to "Highway Patrolman," (the one song that this entire album owes something to), as it tells the story of a Border Patrol officer who makes the choice to let an illegal immigrant cross. The officer is a classic Springsteen character—drawn between the responsibilities of his job and the pull of his empathy. Of the seven solo songs, this one works the best for me, perhaps because the story is so involving. The more you listen to this track, the more you begin to get involved in the lives of the characters. This is the longest solo track on the set but it never seems to sound winded and instead moves dramatically to a conclusion.

BALBOA PARK

This is the second song inspired by an article in the *LA Times*. This one tells the story of a San Diego city park that attracts homeless immigrant kids. The lyrics are powerful and paint a portrait of a difficult life, but it's almost too painful to listen to. Though the characters bear some similarity to the

cross country ragamuffins in Bruce's early work, the fate of Spider, X-man, and Cochise is more severe than getting beaten-up in beach houses. Life for these youngsters means prostitution and AIDS can mean death. This is a particularly dark vision, perhaps the bleakest song he has ever recorded.

DRY LIGHTNING

"Dry Lightning" is as close to romanticism as you can find on *Tom Joad*. This is a simple love song about a man's love for an exotic dancer. There is a sweetness to the way Springsteen phrases this song, and it provides a brief moment of levity. This is one of the band songs and the backup, by Federici in particular, is ethereal and affectionate.

THE NEW TIMER

Musically, I found "The New Timer" to be the weakest song on the album; the melody is hard to follow, there is no discernible chorus, and even Springsteen's guitar is barely present. But if you read the lyrics to this song from the booklet, the writing is a high point for the record.

The story is of a drifter who has detached from his friends and family and lives a life on the rails. There's a "Frank," (along with "Bobby," the most popular name in all of Springsteen's catalog), and there are references to "sir" from the narrator, something that was all over *Nebraska* but that only shows up here on this one tune. The final verse is about the man lying awake at night wondering who he can kill to revenge the death of his friend, and it is tremendous.

The story is similar to Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, in that it tells the tale of two drifters, one who is senselessly murdered. Bruce's song is told from the perspective of the drifter left behind and is fueled by his anger. The vision of Jesus is unusual for a Springsteen song, however he mutters this with almost disdain rather than joy (compare it to "God's light" in "Cautious Man"). For simple poetry, this is Bruce at his finest.

ACROSS THE BORDER

This is another of my favorites, perhaps because of the band backing (which is almost lush compared to the others), or maybe because this is the most optimistic song on the album. Consider this the "Reason to Believe" of *Tom Joad*. It is the one song with hope, the one tune that offers some relief. It's no surprise that it's a song about a dream, not a real life event.

One even wonders, considering the depressing nature of the other tunes, if the journey here refers to a trip back across the border to Mexico, away from the corrupted new world order.

Musically, this song and "Youngstown" are the two most complete tunes. Here Bruce breaks out a great harmonica solo and the violin by Soosie Tyrell is lovely. Also helping Bruce out are vocalists Lisa Lowell and Patti Scialfa, and Dan Federici even gets the call for some of his old-time accordion.

The placement of this song seems wrong to me. I'd be more comforted by the album with this as the final tune (cer-

tainly it's a better bookend than "My Best Was Never Good Enough"). Perhaps that structure would give more optimism than Springsteen thought appropriate.

GALVESTON BAY

Though Springsteen didn't go to Vietnam, that war haunts every album since *Darkness*, and *Tom Joad* is no exception. "Youngstown" also refers to the Vietnam conflict, while "Galveston Bay" re-fights the war but this time it's between Vietnamese immigrants and bigots in Texas.

The specific racial conflict covered here has been written about plenty in the press but Springsteen still manages to put a human face to these players. It's a tale of murder, revenge, justice, hatred, and this time around, redemption and forgiveness. With "Across the Border," this song also offers some respite

from the unrelenting gloom of this album. As part of Springsteen's continuing chronicle of the effect of the Vietnam War on America (this time from the side of the Vietnamese immigrants), this song follows in the tradition of "Shut Out the Light," and "Born in the USA."

MY BEST WAS NEVER GOOD ENOUGH

It's hard to know what to make of this song, which ends the album. One report suggests that Springsteen himself struggled with whether to include it on the record, and that this debate was part of the delay from when he turned the album in until it was scheduled for release. Ultimately, Bruce chose to put this short song on and I can only guess he thought that without a bit of humor the weight of the entire record might be too great.

Though the title sounds as if it would make a powerful Bruce Springsteen song, this is no more than a string of 14 clichés strung together. It's not a song the way Bruce would usually write a song and considering the careful construction behind the rest of this album, it seems particularly unusual here. Though the effort to throw a light number into a work as gloomy as this album might be applauded, this particular song simply confuses me.

What you'll notice—as every listener will—is that Springsteen uses a couple of lines from the movie "Forest Gump." Referencing such a popular movie dates the song and is distracting. Where the other tunes seem timeless—crafted so they could be covered 20 years from now and still have their lyrical power—this tune would have been best left off. It distracts from the strength of the other songs, rather than enhancing them.

As for what the song is actually about, any guess is as good as mine. One *Backstreets* contributor suggests the song is Springsteen's response to the critical lashing heaped upon either the *Human Touch* album or 1992 tour (Bruce's first real torrent of bad reviews), but that might be a bit far-fetched. Springsteen has frequently appeared in public with Tom Hanks, so perhaps it's a private joke between them. Until the usual rounds of interviews begin, we're only left to wonder. In my case, I was left scratching my head in amazement. 🐾

There is genius on
this album in the
lyric-writing and
in the haunting
beauty of stripped-
down melodies,
yet it is still a
confusing and, at
times, frustrating
album.



Way Hometown

Imagine someone tells you that Bruce Springsteen is doing a video shoot for "Hungry Heart," with a German band in Berlin. Would you believe it? Would anyone have believed it? Next time you better believe it, because such bizarre things do happen.

On Friday, July 7, a local radio station in Berlin passed on a rumor that Bruce would appear on Sunday in Berlin to do a video, but no further information or the location was given. Over that weekend there was a lot going on anyway. On Friday they started to cover up the "Reichstag" again, and on Saturday and Saturday night there was the "Love Parade," an endless open-air disco for all you ravers. Both events attracted almost half a million tourists for the weekend. Trains or flights to Berlin were impossible to get.

On Sunday morning came the confirmation over local radio: Yes, Bruce will do a video today at the Cafe Eck-

stein in the eastern part of town. The Cafe Eckstein is located in an very old part of eastern Berlin, which hasn't changed much over the years and has a lot of great atmosphere. It's a street cafe right on a street corner. On the front side they opened all the doors to the street and put a couple of tables outside. Inside there was a bar (which did not open at all!) and on the left the tiny stage, which was made up especially for the event.

According to newspaper reports on Monday, Bruce had arrived on Friday evening and went sightseeing on a Harley. One source even let us know that he was spotted at or near the "Love Parade." On Sunday they were filming on different locations in Berlin, including the famous "Brandenburger Tor," which is closed to public traffic, but Bruce was allowed to drive through a couple of times. The video was done by "DoRo," two Austrian guys named

Rudi Dolezal and Hannes Rossacher, who are doing most of the videos and the TV specials on pop music in Germany. They already did videos for Queen and the Rolling Stones.

How this all came together is still not clear, but from what I know it all started with Wolfgang Niedecken meeting Bruce. Niedecken is probably the most popular rock singer in Germany. His band BAP was tremendously successful in the late '70s and early '80s with a solid rock sound and brilliant lyrics, although they sing in a dialect that is common only to people living around Koln. Niedecken is known as a big fan of Bob Dylan, and his own lyrics are influenced by Dylan and sometimes even by Springsteen. But he has created his own unique style, and his lyrics are the best you will find in German rock music.

Niedecken recently did an album of all Dylan covers, and for one of the songs he did a





Bruce in Berlin By Ralf Dissman

video with DoRo in New York. That might have happened at the same time as Bruce and the E Street Band did the stuff for European TV at Sony Studios. Niedecken ended up as the interviewer for the German TV coverage of Sony Studios. And apart from talking extensively with Bruce about being a father, they both shared their admiration for Bob Dylan.

That's probably how Niedecken and two members of his "Leopardefellband" (Leopard Skin Band, the band he uses for his Dylan-cover project) ended up playing for this event. They added a keyboard player who normally plays with German legend Udo Lindenberg.

Around 6:00 in the afternoon they did the first version of "Hungry Heart"—like a sound-check. At 8:00 people were let in to the bar, where there was room for about 100 people. The rest were outside in front of the cafe, but with the doors open they could hear and see

pretty well. They had organized a few models to join the crowd, and the director even reshuffled the crowd a few times (short and good-looking females to the front—that's one of the reasons I ended up a little bit further toward the back). You might spot the models in the video: they look good but don't know any lyrics to "Hungry Heart" or any other song.

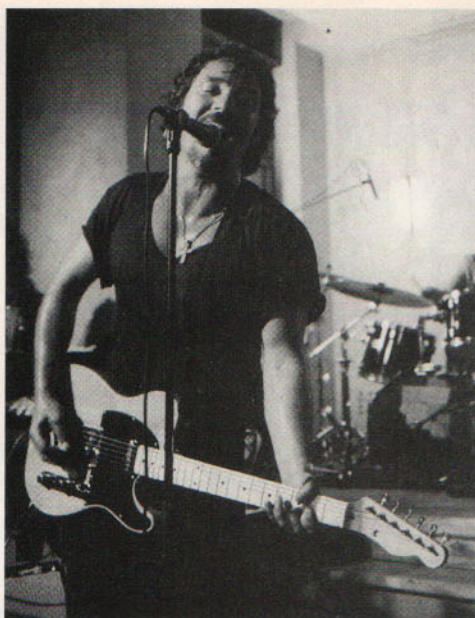
At 9:00 the band took the stage. Bruce had a Fender telecaster, but not his legendary one—they bought or rented one from a local music shop. He was wearing a dark blue shirt, black jeans and a deep suntan, a few chains around his neck, and he might have had one or two drinks. It was the hottest day of the year in Berlin at 33 degrees Celsius—and inside the bar with all the lights for the camera it was much hotter. Someone even compared it with the Mannheim show in '93 (those who were there know what that means!). As I stood in

the doorway I had the benefit of a light breeze in the back all the time.

First they started with two versions of "Hungry Heart." None of the versions played that night featured the regular sing-a-long intro. And there was no saxophone in the band, but Bruce did play guitar through most of the song. The organ and drum sound was very similar to the studio recording, but Bruce's singing was different.

It was surprising that all the versions played were slightly different from each other at the end. After the first two takes of "Hungry Heart," they did a great version of "Down the Road Apiece" with some great singing and guitar playing by Bruce. By that time Bruce was already sweating a lot, but he didn't change his shirt.

Then there was the first break for about half an hour, during which they probably



rearranged things for the cameras or other equipment. The second set ended with a powerful version of "Boom Boom," sadly not featuring the high singing of the third verse we are used to from the *Tunnel of Love* tour, but with an extra guitar solo in between, which again was really great. But the sound engineer on the location was heard to be complaining about Bruce's guitar sound and mentioning once, "No, I will not make it any louder than this. His guitar sound is shit and he wants it to be louder than anything else."

Before the third set there was a long break and some people even walked away from the scene. Inside, getting some cool water to drink was the name of the game for the next hour. Once you left the club itself you couldn't get back in, as they needed more and more room for the cameras in there. The third set finished with two Dylan covers. Both were played in exactly the same arrangement as the Leopardellband played on their tour. First was a pretty hard-rocking version of "Knockin' on Heaven's Door"—as far as I can remember, the first time Bruce did that live on stage. He did the first verse, then

IR SEIGHT
VUNDERBAR!
—
ES IST GAEL
TO PLAY
HERE IN
BERLIN!
DANKE.

Niedecken did the second verse in his special German dialect. The drummer and the bass player each did one themselves. Next was a fast version of "Highway 61 Revisited." Bruce and Wolfgang traded verses,

but got lost through the song. One verse was left out and another was used twice.

After another break, the last set started right after midnight. There were still people out in the street, dancing on tables, phone booths or whatever. The atmosphere was still very relaxed and good. The fourth set had only one version of "Hungry Heart." Bruce answered some shouts from the crowd for "Hungry Heart" with, "Well, we might do that one!" He didn't talk very much but tried out some German. He thanked everyone for their patience and said that he had a good time here. During one of the versions of "Hungry Heart" he tried to get closer to the audience. But as the stage was really tiny and not that solid he almost fell over into the crowd and was held up by a female member of the audience. He also changed the lyrics for the last two versions to "Now here I'm back in Berlin again." The singing of the audience was really great and got better all the time. Strangely, there were almost no shouts for any requests. I thought about "I Think I'm Turning Into Elvis," but that's one that sounds pretty stupid if you shout it out.

At one point he briefly gave away his guitar; later his guitar strap came loose from the guitar, and then something on his mic stand broke. He looked pretty helpless when he tried to fix it with gaffer tape, but Wolfgang helped him out. All this happened during the different versions of "Hungry Heart." It might have given one the impression that he was not very professional. But I had the feeling that Bruce foremost was playing for



himself, then with the band, then for the people there and then for the video cameras.

After the last "Hungry Heart" and some discussions, the band did "Honky Tonk Women," again with Bruce and Wolfgang sharing vocals. It was a pretty good rendition, but compared to the songs before it was a bit lame. Then the band left and Bruce did "Thunder Road" alone, with only his electric guitar and without any harmonica. It was a great version, although his voice was pretty rough by that time. The band came back and further discussions led to "Glory Days," a song the band obviously hadn't tried out before. Bruce later mentioned that they hadn't rehearsed together, but I guess the band did at least "Hungry Heart" on their own before. "Glory Days" made the crowd even crazier than they were before (and made it therefore hotter inside).

Next to last was "Jumpin' Jack Flash," of which better versions are also known to the public, and then Bruce and the band made everyone totally crazy with a great version of "Twist and Shout," during which he asked Wolfgang to sing a verse as well. But the man who knows lots of Dylan lyrics without any flaw didn't know the words to "Twist and Shout." The arrangements to "Glory Days" and "Twist and Shout" were pretty regular. But again you could see and feel that Bruce enjoyed himself tremendously.

Around one in the morning the band left the stage and a sweating audience shaking their heads in disbelief. Bruce Springsteen playing at a bar in Berlin to do a video for a 15-year-old song? Was it for real or just a dream? No, it did happen for sure. Fifteen

minutes after the end of the show Bruce left in a big Mercedes-Benz with no chances for autographs or whatever since most of the audience was still around, trying to surround his car. It was said that he would fly to Italy on Monday for a vacation in Europe.

But there still remains the question: why did that all happen? Probably not only to "thank my loyal fans in Germany" (as one newspaper quoted him) or to fill some pages in some fanzines. "Hungry Heart" was released as a Europe-only single in late summer, and if you do a single these days, you need a video—even when you're the Boss. Jon Landau was seen at the place, but it seems no one could talk to him about that. Toby Scott was there as well; they probably did the mixing of the sound there in Berlin.

Some newspapers in Berlin had a report on the events, and even two or three news programs on German TV had a short report. I don't care if some people still don't believe it, and I don't care if I end up somewhere in the video or not. It was a real once-in-a-lifetime experience, something a lot of people would pay a lot of money for. It didn't cost me anything at all, but it took me some time to realize how bizarre the whole event really was. Actually, it came to me on 4:30 in the morning on the highway with another 100 km to drive home, the sunrise in my rearview mirror, Tom Petty singing "Stories We Could Tell" on the car stereo, still sitting in my sweat-drenched clothes, opening another bottle of water, with the rest of the people in the car already asleep and probably still humming the chorus to "Hungry Heart." 🍷

NOW HERE I AM BACK IN BERLIN AGAIN

•7/9/95

Hungry Heart
Hungry Heart
Down the Road Apiece

Hungry Heart
Hungry Heart
Boom Boom

Hungry Heart
Hungry Heart
Knockin' on Heaven's Door
Highway 61 Revisited

Hungry Heart
Honky Tonk Woman
Thunder Road
Glory Days
Jumpin' Jack Flash
Twist and Shout

With Wolfgang Niedecken
and his Leopardeffellband

Bruce Springsteen: lead vocals, lead guitar
Wolfgang Niedecken: lead/back. vocals,
rhythm guitar

Ken Taylor: bass, back. vocals

Betram Engel: drums, back. vocals

Pasqual Kravetz: keyboards, back. vocals

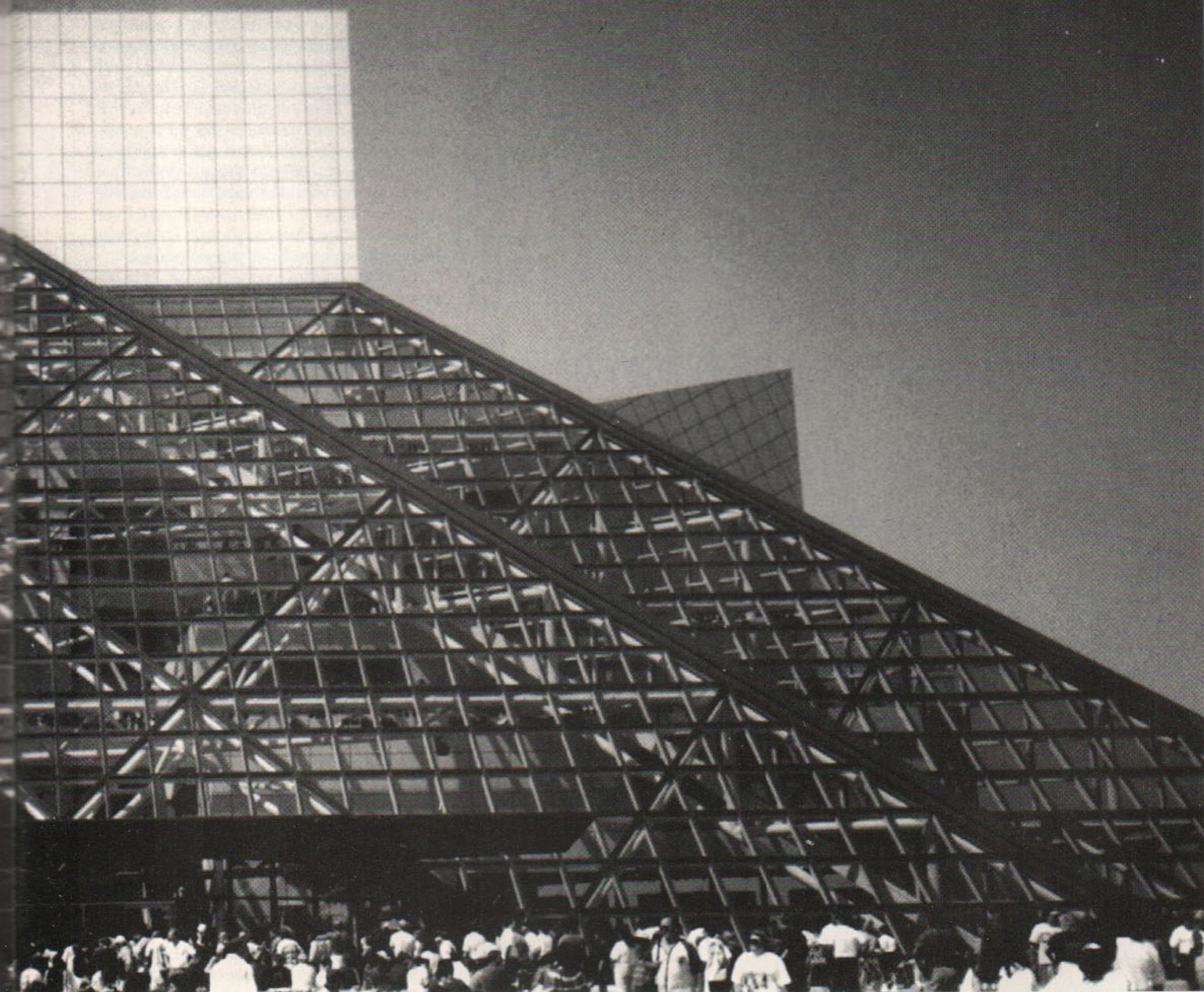
Cafe Eckstein, Berlin, Germany

Hello, Cleveland!



• September 1, 1995 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum

"ANYONE WHO PLAYS IN A ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND knows that this is a great rock town," Max Weinberg told a press conference crowd before the Concert for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Fans clearly knew it too, as thousands converged on the rightfully proud city of Cleveland on Labor Day weekend. The grand opening of the Hall of Fame and Museum came nearly a decade after the Hall of Fame's first inductions in 1986 and the announcement that the Hall had a home in Cleveland. A striking glass and white-tile structure, ➤

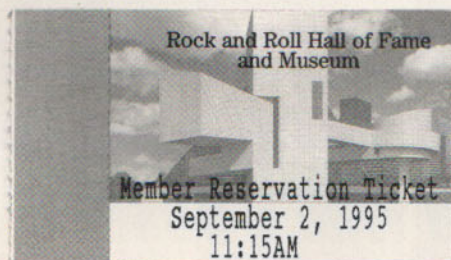


The Rock 'n' Roll City shows the world who's Boss ***By Christopher Phillips***

the physical home of the Hall of Fame sits on the shore of Lake Erie, just east of the site of Saturday night's kick-off concert, Cleveland Stadium.

In addition to Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band's first announced concert appearance together in nearly seven years, the museum itself was a big enough draw for Bruce fans, including myself, to make the trip to Cleveland. Even though Springsteen won't be eligible for induction until 1998, his contribution to rock 'n' roll was clearly enough to earn his own exhibit. But with tickets in my hand to see Bruce and the E Streeters together again—a prospect that seemed out of the question less than a year ago—the actual museum had taken a back seat to the concert in my mind. It wasn't until I walked up to the massive glass structure glistening in the sun on Saturday morning that it really struck me that I'd be doing more than just killing time before a show. The museum turned out to be the highlight of the trip; even though the time I spent inside was longer than the seven-hour show, I could happily have spent twice as much time there. I can't say the same about the concert, but more on that later.

I arrived in Cleveland late Friday evening, too late for the day's events, but in time for the recap on the local TV news. Both the ribbon cutting ceremony (that's a portion of the ribbon on page 20) and the "Rockin' in the Streets" parade sounded like more fun than the flight delays I sat through, but I hadn't missed too much. Springsteen's closed soundcheck at Cleveland Stadium that afternoon would have been something to see; he and the band reportedly ran through every song that they would perform at the concert. As for catching up with Bruce that night, rumor had it that he might show up for a surprise jam at the Agora. News cameras on the scene, however, showed that the Mothership had landed—with a P-Funk show in full swing, it seemed doubtful that Bruce would be taking the stage. Catching Springsteen at the Ritz-Carlton was also a thought, but I decided to just call it a night. As for Bruce, it turned out he was at the museum late Friday for a private tour.



SATURDAY MORNING, WHEN THE museum officially opened to the public, it was my turn. The plaza outside the museum was packed (actually, the blocks outside were packed). Some were

brandishing passes to get in early and some just realizing that they needed tickets and a reservation to get in at all. All were clamoring at the doors or at the nearest staff member, certainly making for a hell of a first day on the job.

From the outside, which is dominated by those great glass pyramids, it was easy to get a glimpse inside the museum before my time was called. With the exception of a few relics—like cars from U2's "Zoo TV" tour—hanging here and there, so much of the vast interior seemed to house nothing but space. So how could the place hold all the memorabilia I'd heard about? The towering glass pyramids are actually just the tip of the iceberg: as it turns out, most of the collection is down in the basement. Once inside, my friend Josh and I were immediately filed down an escalator to the Ahmet M. Ertegun Exhibition Hall on the floor below.

We checked our tickets at a booth and headed over to the exhibition hall's waiting doors. As my ticket was taken and I walked up a ramp into the relative darkness of the hall, it felt like entering some oversized boardwalk funhouse. That sensation didn't go away as I saw the "Mystery Train" theater straight ahead, and a long hallway stretching off to the left with displays and video monitors, sights and sounds beckoning like carnival attractions.

The curators had stressed that the museum wouldn't be an amusement park—or worse, a huge Hard Rock Cafe. For the most part they've succeeded, with a celebration of rock 'n' roll that turns out to be just as educational as it is entertaining. As opposed to a smattering of memorabilia like a Hard Rock Cafe, the museum presents clearly organized, well annotated and insightful exhibits. Still, it's hard for a rock fan *not* to feel like a kid at a theme park. There may be no rides and, thankfully, no animatronics, but it's at least as much fun and you'll want to do everything at once.

The hallway that funnels visitors into the larger exhibition space acts as a conceptual introduction as well: touching on origins and influences, looking at the roots of rock before opening up to the vast sprawl of everything that followed in the main hall. After a photo display of rock's early influences came the first of the museum's many interactive exhibits, "The Beat Goes On." Tracing rock 'n' roll influences here was a nice idea, but more than anything it served to keep my expectations on a reasonable level. Looking up Springsteen on the touch-screen, I found links back to Roy Orbison and Bob Dylan. Clicking on each brought an audio sample. Moving forward from the Boss I found... that I couldn't go forward. And to see Orbison or Dylan's influences I would have to return to the main menu and look them up separately. What I had in mind

may have been too ambitious, not to mention convoluted, like constructing a family tree where everyone has at least four sets of parents. But the limited scope of the exhibit made it feel incomplete.

Similarly, the "Come See About Me" multimedia database elsewhere in the hall let me check out artist overviews and bios, in some cases providing audio and even video. But more often than not I was just reading screens of text and wondering why I had those earphones on.

Our first glimpse of memorabilia comes with "U Got the Look," an exhibit of original stage costumes on mannequins in a row along the curving corridor. With so much personal memorabilia, the museum serves to bring those larger-than-life individuals down to size, to let us see past the smoke and lights and get a sense of the individuals behind the art. Which, in the costume section, begs questions like: Is Gene Simmons really that short? Even in his platform demon-boots? That could be why there's no Springsteen gear.

Following the costumes around the corner, we hit the Big Top. Throughout the large open area of the main hall, freestanding displays and partial walls hold an astounding number of rock artifacts, arranged by performer. There are more outfits here, like the original Sgt. Pepper's uniforms and Keith Moon's blue platform shoes, along with instruments, posters, report cards, cub scout uniforms, guilottes, you name it. For some of the artists represented in this prime space—like Alice Cooper and ZZ Top—visual considerations might have outweighed considerations of their place in the history of rock. I got the feeling AC/DC's cannons would probably be in there too if the band wasn't likely saving them for another tour. But this was all stuff I would check out later, because dead ahead was a wall that read, "Bruce Springsteen."

Springsteen shares a freestanding display with Paul Simon. A glass case houses handwritten documents: lyrics to *Born to Run* material; a set list from 1979; and Bruce's tentative track listing for *Born in the USA*, which at that point included "Murder Incorporated" and "Johnny Bye Bye." A number of posters hang above the glass case. A Castiles "Birthquake" poster is autographed by all the members of the band; although Bruce clearly signed it fairly recently (adding, "A real oldie!"), the focus is on the early years. All the posters are from the pre-E Street Band era, including Earth, Doctor Zoom and the Sonic Boom, and the Bruce Springsteen Band. Hanging on the wall above the posters are two guitars, a Gibson Epiphone dating back to the Castiles, and a bass guitar from Garry Tallent.

I spent quite a bit of time here, maneuvering myself into position to read

everything. Two poems from his college literary magazine were here, one which starts off, "Earth children turn their eyes upward/As the rain falls into outstretched arms." The other poem, "My Lady," closes with the lines, "I will soon be enshrouded by the blackness of night/And the loneliness of my lady death."

Hanging around the Bruce display was also a good way to pick up advance word on the evening's show. As much I wanted to wait and be surprised, it's hard to resist when someone asks, "Hey, did you hear what Bruce is playing tonight?" Everything Springsteen played that night was correctly predicted during the day by people at the museum, including his pairings with Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* also predicted a duet between Springsteen and yet "other special guests," including Al Green on "Take Me to the River." Rumors were circulating about surprise guests like Bob Dylan and Neil Young.

As impressive as the Springsteen display is—there isn't one thing there that wouldn't make one hell of a cornerstone item in any collection—it didn't affect me in quite the same way as some of the other exhibits. It's something in itself that a non-inductee was given so much attention, but to me it didn't offer the same sense of humanity that added another layer to other artists' exhibits: the kind of thing that radiated from John Lennon's glasses, on display a few yards away. And even though I've never been a huge Doors fan, there was something captivating about Jim Morrison's grade-school handwriting exercise that read, "I Love You Mom," in large, clumsy print. Of course, the fact that those artists are no longer alive could have made all the difference. But Springsteen, the man, still seemed as closely guarded and untouchable as before.

I was surprised at how evocative a pair of spectacles could be. Though I'd like to think that this kind of stuff doesn't matter, I found myself looking for a leather jacket, a pair of jeans, a baseball cap.... A lot of the Bruce memorabilia—the yearbook, the poems credited in the literary magazine to "Bruce Sprengsteen"—seems a bit removed, as if there's still a curtain we aren't getting to see behind. It may be that the stuff we'd most like to get a close look at just isn't up for grabs. The guitar we *really* want to see isn't going to be retired to a museum wall any time soon, and it's better off where it is. But here's hoping Springsteen might see fit to donate, say, a certain Teac 4-track recorder.

Along those lines, the museum would be a great venue for insights into Springsteen's writing and recording process. "Good Vibrations: The Making of



ALTHOUGH BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S INDUCTION INTO THE ROCK AND Roll Hall of Fame is still a couple of years down the road, his presence in the museum is not slight. Sharing wall space in the main exhibit hall with Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison, the Springsteen collection is one of the more popular attractions, even though it does not contain stage clothes, personal belongings or big-ticket items like the leather jacket he wore on the *Born to Run* album cover.

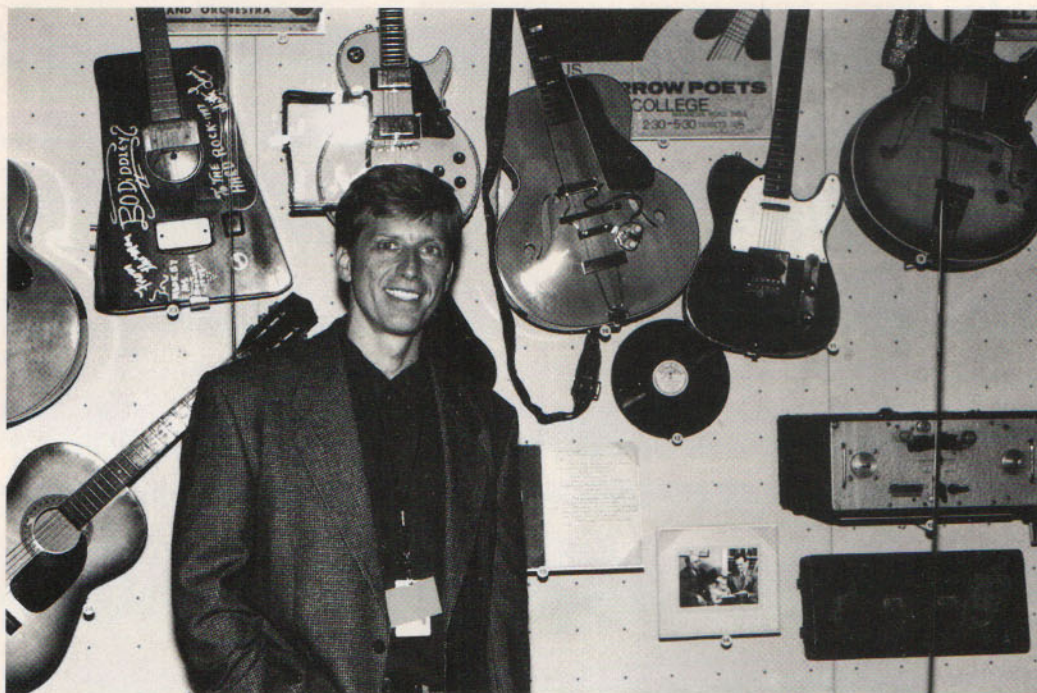
Unlike other artists who lent freely to the museum, none of the artifacts on display came directly from Springsteen. As co-curator of the Springsteen exhibit, I mainly relied on E Street band bassist Garry Tallent and longtime Springsteen collector Billy Smith for artifacts and other memorabilia. Springsteen and manager Jon Landau were contacted on more than one occasion by chief curator Jim Henke about Springsteen digging into his personal collection of prized items. Springsteen never said no to Henke's request. However, he never found the time to sift through his own archives to find suitable material for the exhibit.

The narrative that accompanies the Springsteen exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame museum places Springsteen's rise to prominence in the mid-'70s at an important crossroads in rock history. "Bruce Springsteen revitalized rock and roll at a time when it seemed in danger of losing its idealism," wrote curator Parke Puterbaugh. "From the beginning, the Jersey-born rocker embraced rock's promise of transcendence with the fervor of a disciple. 'I'm just a prisoner of rock and roll!' became his concert-closing affirmation and rallying cry." Such words possess the kind of emotional intensity we've come to expect from Springsteen's music and live performances.

There are two instruments on display in the Springsteen exhibit. A 1964 Epiphone Granada guitar once owned by Paul Popkin, a member of Springsteen's earliest band, the Castiles, and often played by Springsteen in the mid-'60s, is complemented by Garry Tallent's Guild bass guitar. The bulk of the exhibit, however, is made up of early Child, Steel Mill, and Dr. Zoom and the Sonic Boom posters and handbills from the late '60s and early '70s. There are also handwritten lyrics to such Springsteen classics as "Jungleland," "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," "Backstreets," and "Meeting Across the River." There are two drafts to "Meeting Across the River" on display. The first is an early draft, when the song was called "The Big Fix/Date Across the River." The second draft is the final version of the song.

The remaining artifacts in the Springsteen exhibit include a touching letter from Springsteen to a fan, a ticket to a Steel Mill concert, Springsteen's Freehold High School Yearbook from 1967, and a 1969 copy of *Seascape*, the Ocean County College literary magazine that contains original poetry by Springsteen. The poems might well be the first examples of his verse that had ever been published; unfortunately the editors misspelled his name, calling the author "Bruce Sprengsteen."

—Robert Santelli



Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum Director of Education (and Backstreets Associate Editor) Robert Santelli, in front of the blues exhibit he helped procure.

a Song" actually makes that kind of disclosure from Springsteen seem possible. It's a fantastic exhibit—I've had dreams about this kind of thing—where you can check out a song's evolution over headphones at several display stations. One of the songs included is Jackson Browne's "Sky Blue and Black," already one of his finer moments, and here part of a fascinating insight into the songwriting process. Over a headset, Browne describes how the song took shape from the original riff through several stages to the finished recording.

The process is illustrated not only with lyric sheets, photos, and musical notations on the wall, but also with several recorded drafts on the headphones. It's only a short leap to imagine tracing a song or two through Springsteen's '82-'84 recording sessions, with some "electric Nebraska" thrown in for good measure; or running commentary by Springsteen on the evolution of "Frankie." Clearly wishful thinking, but with the promise of rotating exhibits and constant additions it's surprisingly not out of the question.

Facing walls of the "Rock Around the Clock" theater are covered from floor to ceiling with banks of video screens. Playing is a constant Emergency Broadcast Network-style barrage, combining rock music with concurrent events and working its way from the '50s to the present. I stood in the center moving my head back and forth for a while, but a wide-eyed guy crouched and shuddering in the corner—no kidding—warned of the dangers of hanging out here too long.

That seemed to be the perfect site for

some rock 'n' roll aversion therapy, but prolonged exposure to the "One Hit Wonders" might be more effective. This next exhibit covered such flashes in the pan as Lipps, Inc. ("Funkytown") and the Starland Vocal Band ("Afternoon Delight") (who won both the Best New Artist Grammy and a permanent spot in tattoo-form on Homer Simpson's arm), those bands whose place in rock history comes from capturing a huge audience for a brief period of time and then never being heard from again. This was a great example of how remarkably comprehensive the museum is, not only covering a wide spectrum of rock history, but doing so from many different perspectives.

Recognizing the various ways to skin a cat is one of the museum's real strengths. There are individual displays focusing on R&B and soul, folk, and the blues, which included the guitars of Leadbelly, Howlin' Wolf, and Muddy Waters. "Rock Around the Clock" traced rock's history through contemporary events around the world, and another more elaborate exhibit, "Rockin' All Over the World," comes from yet another angle. It focuses on the phenomenon of the "scene," looking at different cities as progressive chapters in the history of rock 'n' roll. Curving around the outer wall of the exhibition hall with an extensive use of memorabilia, this exhibit follows rock 'n' roll from Memphis through New Orleans, Detroit, San Francisco, London, New York and Seattle. After making my way through, lingering at my hometown memorabilia in the last case, I figured it was time to head upstairs.

I got a quick look at the Rolling Stones display and Janis Joplin's psychedelic Porsche on my way out, but time was of the essence. The glass pyramids that dominate the exterior are reflected in the structure of the floors of the museum, with each floor getting smaller as you go up—so it turns out I could have stuck around a little longer in the exhibition hall, since it probably contains as much to see as the other floors put together. Although most of the artist memorabilia is located on the bottom floor, it paid to keep an eye out as I worked my way up: As well organized as the museum is, some great stuff overflowed into the nooks and crannies. I had been looking for a Neil Young display, and it was pointed out to me later in a free-standing case by the fourth-floor escalator. For the most part, though, the focus

on the upper floors is less on individual artists and more on various aspects of the rock phenomenon in general.

The second floor concentrates on the media's association with rock 'n' roll, from radio to video, printed page, and movie screen. A display focuses on Cleveland DJ Alan Freed, and a nearby room pays tribute to radio and rock 'n' roll DJs all over the US, with original station IDs to check out on headphones (at least that's what I gathered, they seemed to be on the fritz). The room is lined with a collection of vintage radios from the beginning of the rock era.

The best thing on this floor is the actual studio, behind glass, from Sam Phillips' Memphis Recording Service. The original equipment—including Ampex tape, mixing board, and cutting lathe for acetates—has been transported here and reconstructed, presenting a crucial piece of rock 'n' roll history.

Until the level three theater opens next year, the third floor is just the home of the Museum Cafe. As always there were nice touches, though. Food-related photographs, like a great shot of R.E.M. at an Athens lunch counter, hang throughout this level. It was way past time for lunch by the time I made it this far, and luckily I had a pass for the curator's reception held here—(museum-goers were otherwise ushered straight onto the



next escalator up). The reception was presided over by the larger-than-life schoolmaster from *The Wall*, hanging high overhead and letting out an unintelligible admonishment every few minutes. I'm not sure if it was the pudding-and-meat bit—I guess I was concentrating on the generous spread—but the suggestion was there nevertheless.

Just as I figured that I had my fill on this floor, cheering and applause rose up from the lobby along with loud strains of "I Got You (I Feel Good)." I got to the balcony in time to see James Brown and his entourage making their way in the door and through the crowd below. As the Godfather looked up, grinning and waving, I looked around to see hundreds of people looking down from various levels. My birds-eye view of that unmistakable plasticized coif gave me a few minutes' pause, and from this vantage point I also got a good feel for the striking design of the museum, with its terraced balconies and jutting walkways. It's probably only a matter of time before an action movie culminates in a chase scene here.

Floor Four is home of the "It's Only Rock and Roll Cinema," and as I topped the escalator there was only one minute until the next showing of *Rock Is*. Even though I'd been avoiding the movies showing throughout the museum, the timing here was too perfect. Plus, I was itching to see some performance footage for a change. Although *Rock Is* did show the artists in action, including live clips of "War" and "Born in the USA," the film was more a look at rock culture in general and how it has affected our society from the beginning. Directed by Bill Couturie, the film manages to make quite an impact in only 20 minutes.

It was refreshing to see the "sex" and "drugs" constituents of the famous rock 'n' roll trinity presented here without value judgment—and kind of weird at first to see kids of all ages taking it in. With the volume cranked, no expletives deleted, and no parental advisory, it was not only a goosebump-raising 20 minutes, but also an encouraging indication of the museum's stance. Even if the idea of a museum strikes some as inherently sanitizing, with "rock 'n' roll" in the title people should know what to expect. It may not bear witness to the pinnacles of depravity—you'll still have to read *Hammer of the Gods* to get the scoop on Led Zeppelin in a tub of baked beans—but the museum's curators haven't intentionally tried to dilute, downplay or censor any aspect of rock culture. The only warning this film might have needed was that it contains more remarks from Bono than the average rock fan can stomach.

Another floor up, the road narrows. Besides a small studio from which D.J.s can broadcast live, the fifth floor serves

primarily as a waiting room. A line forms here in the Hall of Fame Lobby, as spiral stairs lead to the uppermost level, the Hall of Fame itself. While I was here a few members of the Rock Bottom Remainers—Dave Marsh, Stephen King, and Dave Barry, better known for their day jobs—were on their way upstairs. The band was fresh from their gig the night before, playing the Hall's black-tie, \$1000-a-plate dinner. Springsteen has played with the Remainers before, but on this occasion Nils Lofgren was their over-qualified guest of the night.

But, as the Remainers would probably be the first to admit, it couldn't compete with the black-tie rock 'n' roll affair we were witnessing here on the fifth floor. A row of television monitors show clips from the legendary Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, including introductions, speeches, and the famous all-star jams. If only all waiting rooms were as entertaining. It was great to finally get a chance to see some of the inductions—almost all of which have included Bruce—and with that fresh in my mind I headed up the last set of stairs.

Arriving at the top of the spiral stairs in the middle of a darkened room, it took a few minutes for my eyes to adjust. This small, square room is the entire sixth floor, the actual "Hall" of the Hall of Fame. The only light in the room comes from black walls themselves, shining through the etched names and signatures, and from the inset black-and-white monitors set in the walls.

The monitors display images of the inductees along with a quote from the person that gave their induction speech, so John Hammond and Creedence Clearwater Revival each had quotes from Springsteen. Even with as large a crowd as there was on opening day, the room commands a hush. Those few who said anything talked in whispers; it was a whisper from my friend Bernie that pointed out Dion DiMucci, not on the wall but in the flesh. His trademark cap was a giveaway, but I'm not sure I would have recognized him otherwise in the darkness.

The Hall itself has taken quite a few knocks for its tomb-like atmosphere and striking similarity to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The silence is striking, too, compared to the rest of the museum, and there is a feeling of quiet reverence here that may not seem appropriate for rock 'n' roll. But for the innovative, committed individuals who helped create rock 'n' roll, such respect is certainly due; for better or worse, the Hall takes that responsibility seriously.

We followed Dion from a distance, and as we watched him find and stare at his own name on the wall, the place seemed perfect.

On my way back down to the ground floor, I figured I'd hit the HMV museum store by the entrance. Going from the dark, ethereal spirit of rock 'n' roll to the packaging, marketing, and commodifying of rock 'n' roll—all of which I'm a sucker for—might have been somewhat abrupt. Fortunately, a 45-minute wait in line to get into the store eased the transition. I still can't believe I waited, but I was lost from the minute I got in line—after all, every minute that ticked by would have been a wasted investment if I'd left.

After another 45-minute wait at the checkout line—their first day on the registers not helping matters—I managed to get out of there with only minor financial damage. As for my schedule, a glance at my watch told me that I had only a half an hour until the concert, and I had left my ticket in the hotel room. Dinner would have to wait—I figured I'd pick up something once I got to the stadium (which turned out to be a beer and a dog for the better part of ten dollars). I ran out the door, across the plaza and back to the hotel, swimming upstream through a crowd of people who hadn't forgotten their tickets,

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GRABBED MY TICKET AND MADE good time, thanks to the Rock Loop Bus I caught on the way back to the stadium—one of the many examples of Cleveland's preparedness for the weekend. Still, I barely made it: I worked my way through the throng of people, rushed down the stadium stairs as Kid Leo was working up the crowd, and found my seat mere seconds before the first act—Springsteen and the E Street Band—took the stage.

The museum had distracted me from any pre-concert anticipation over the course of the day. With little on my mind besides getting to my seat in time for the show, it was a great dream-like jolt to suddenly find myself looking at Bruce and the E Street Band onstage.

They were joined by Chuck Berry for "Johnny B. Goode." It was a great way to kick things off, but as a performance it wasn't mind-blowing. Springsteen seemed to be holding back, and that set the tone for his performances for the rest of the night. Although his reserve seemed to be a suitable, wide-eyed deferment to rock 'n' roll legends, it was disappointing to get staid performances instead of seeing Springsteen really cut loose—especially after he's set his own example with leg-

endary rave-up encores of the kind of rock 'n' roll classics that this event called for.

There was a lot of excitement at Saturday night's show, but for me, the excitement came more from the event itself, from the mental thrill of seeing living legends onstage; it rarely crossed over to that gut level. There were some stunning performances, but not enough to counterbalance the weight that dragged down the seven-hour show.

At least they were able to keep things moving, thanks to a two-sided revolving stage, with a third spot at stage right for acoustic performances. John Mellencamp came out quickly after the "Johnny B. Goode" prologue to open the show with "R.O.C.K. in the U.S.A." Advance word was that performers would be doing songs made famous by Hall of Fame members, but this made it clear from the beginning that there would be a few exceptions. Mellencamp's song was particularly appropriate, considering lyrics like "Spotlight on Martha Reeves, and don't forget James Brown," and he made a nice transition into "Little Latin Lupe Lu" and back again.

The song was also very appropriate given the overwhelmingly U.S.-centric nature of the night. The Kinks' and Eric Burdon were the only acts from across the pond on the bill, despite rumors that members of the Rolling Stones or the Beatles might show. Presumably, Hall of Fame members not present were at least accounted for when artists paid tribute to them; up next was Mellencamp's tribute to Van Morrison, on "Wild Night." But it seemed several times removed from Morrison, considering that it was Mellencamp's own funkier hit version of the song and that as Martha Reeves joined him onstage she was essentially filling in for Me'Shell NdegéOcello. (Of course, that was better than nothing—astonishingly enough, Elvis wasn't evoked all night.) Next, Bon Jovi did the Beatles by way of Joe Cocker on "A Little Help From My Friends" and was joined by Burdon for two Animals classics, "It's My Life" and "We Gotta Get Out of This Place."

Melissa Etheridge's salute to '60s girl groups included an introductory rap to "Leader of the Pack" that went absolutely nowhere. Lackluster as it was, this seemed to at least be an attempt at some Boss-style melodrama, knowing her affinity for Springsteen. It would have been all the more satisfying for Springsteen to have shown Etheridge how it's done in his set later on. But despite what seemed like the perfect occasion for some kind of rock 'n' roll remembrance, there wasn't much talk from Bruce; this "sad love story" had to serve as all the rock melodrama of the night.

Dr. John was up next, followed by the first real jaw-dropper of the night, Al

Green. Just as I was thinking that this huge stadium show, with its huge video screens, wouldn't allow any real sparks to fly, Green floored the crowd with powerful, uplifting versions of "Tired of Being Alone" and Sam Cooke's "Change Is Gonna Come."

Homestate hero Chrissie Hynde and the Pretenders got a roar from the Ohio crowd as they went into "My City Was Gone," followed by a stirring cover of Neil Young's "The Needle and the Damage Done." It was fantastic to have both Al Green and The Pretenders in the same show, but they seemed isolated from each other. So far the show felt disjointed: With few substantial collaborations, the sense of community that we saw in the induction ceremonies (and that most people were probably expecting) simply wasn't there.

The time-tested Johnny Cash was up next with "Folsom Prison Blues," after which he asked John Mellencamp to join him. I'd been waiting for more of the promised pairings, but Mellencamp's embarrassing duet with Cash didn't bode well. The Man in Black's commanding presence—evidenced by his ability to wow a crowd with a simple, "Hi, I'm Johnny Cash"—only sharpened the contrast between them. There may not have been much time to rehearse, but Mellencamp's gum-smacking flubbing of "Ring of Fire" left him seriously outclassed.

On the other hand, my opinion of Jackson Browne went up a few notches after his version of "Redemption Song," which really worked. Aretha Franklin did her thing, but when she was followed by John Fogerty it was hard to believe that time had moved at the same rate for the two of them. Fogerty was absolutely riveting on "Born on the Bayou" and "Fortunate Son."

Things stayed at a peak for a while. Soul Asylum, whose inclusion here seemed questionable to some, managed to both prove themselves and show that they knew their place. They provided incredible backup for Iggy Pop on "Back Door Man" mixed with "I Wanna Be Your Dog," and stayed on to do the same for Lou Reed's breathtaking "Sweet Jane." There were moments during this set when it looked as if the songs might get away from them and they were just trying to hang on: an element of danger integral to rock 'n' roll missing from much of the night.

Although the highlights were coming hard and heavy at this point, they were still mixed with some frustrating slumps. Gin Blossoms came out on the acoustic stage, their pleasant set crying out for damnation by faint praise. They were followed by Sheryl Crow—and really, who better to pay tribute to the Rolling Stones? The only thing more bewildering than Crow being on stage at all was the

frequency with which she came back.

Back on the upswing, George Clinton and the P-Funk All Stars joined consummate funk bassist Larry Graham of the Family Stone for an amazing "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" and "I Want to Take You Higher." My only complaint was a minor one, but it was this type of wasted potential that overshadowed the entire show: Where was James Brown? I guess to bring him out at this point in the night wouldn't have been as grand an entrance for the Godfather, but to have three generations of funk with such direct lineage would have been a summit for the ages. As it was, they didn't quite tear the roof off the sucker, but it was still one of the few momentarily fitting pairings of the night.

The Kinks were even better, another of the concert's clear highlights. Ray Davies knew how to work the crowd, and they stuck to their big guns: "All Day and All of the Night" and "Lola."

Finally, after Ann and Nancy Wilson, came the announcement I'd been waiting for: "From Asbury Park, New Jersey, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band!" Bruce didn't really start off in overdrive, though, opening with an excruciatingly slow version of "Shake, Rattle and Roll." (As even Dave Marsh referred to it on the internet's Luckytown Digest: "Shake Rattle and... Snore.") Things picked up as Max went into that familiar Bo Diddley beat—clearly we were going to get "She's the One" as we had heard earlier in the day, but what else would Bruce pull out for this special occasion? "Mona"? "Not Fade Away"? Yet another soon-to-be-classic intro? The answer: four "Hey Bo Diddley" chants before going straight into the song. It was a good rendition, if somewhat perfunctory, climaxing in an exciting, stomping three-way guitar showdown.

Bruce brought out his second collaborator of the night. "It's my pleasure to bring out now one of my all-time heroes; the one and only; the man who doesn't play rock 'n' roll, he is rock 'n' roll: Jerry Lee Lewis!" At the end of two Killer classics, "Great Balls of Fire" and "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," Jerry Lee got up, waved, and left Springsteen and the band to finish "Whole Lotta Shakin'" on their own. This remains somewhat of a mystery: Lewis seemed happy enough with the band—saying, "Shake it one time for Bruce and the boys, they like it too"—and with good reason: the E Street Band were dead-on all night. Some speculated that Lewis didn't like the sluggish pace, but that's hard to believe since he called out "Easy now," several times toward the end of his set. As a somewhat confused but always professional Springsteen said, "We didn't rehearse that part."



An unreported duet with the Boss? Nope, just a fan trying to get in the last word as security drags him away.

Their closer, as predicted that day, was "Darkness on the Edge of Town." And practically everyone sat down, en masse. After the initial thrill—Bruce is onstage, and he's playing "Darkness"—I realized that closing his set with a mid-tempo song was not such a good idea. This event was practically crying out for "Born to Run," and Springsteen was inexplicably resisting any urge to whip the crowd into a frenzy. For a non-inducted artist to be playing one of his own songs at this once-in-a-lifetime rock 'n' roll celebration and *not* play the song recently voted as the number one song of all time (by British music critics), to me it didn't make sense. Considering that he hardly missed a chance to play "Born to Run" with his '92-'93 band, this seemed the perfect time for the E Street Band to reclaim it and blow the crowd away... but I guess he had his reasons. As the song came to a close, a long-haired fan leapt on stage and got his arms around Springsteen. As security guards wrestled the guy away, Bruce added, "That's rock 'n' roll!"

Springsteen's set came off a little better when I watched the videotape: With more focus on Springsteen's face than on the sitting crowd, "Darkness" was both impassioned and powerful; I got a better look at the band, including a very excited Mighty Max mouthing along on "She's the One." There was an odd moment at the end of the set, especially noticeable on tape, when Springsteen and the E Street Band came together downstage. Instead of putting his arm around Max, Springsteen looked preoccupied and ready to get off the stage. There's been some speculation since the show about what might have been coloring his mood at that moment, ranging from anger at security to frustration at the Jerry Lee Lewis segment. Who knows what was going on in Bruce's head, but HBO cameras reveal that the stage-diving fan shook up Bruce more than he let on. Cameras that caught the band as they came offstage picked up Springsteen saying, "Came out of nowhere... came out of nowhere." It was, after all, the only "security breach" of the

entire night, and came at a particularly important moment as the set was coming to a close. Nils and Patti echoed the Boss's bewilderment. They also showed Nils saying, "...just appeared! I didn't see it coming," and Patti replied, "I didn't know, I was like, who is that?" That was rock 'n' roll, apparently.

Following up the Boss was Natalie Merchant, a very weak second jab in a Jon Landau one-two punch. Robbie Robertson's "The Weight" referred perhaps to Sheryl Crow, who was back again to add backup vocals. After asking for a moment of silence for Jerry Garcia (which, of course, many in the crowd interpreted as "hoots and whistles for Jerry Garcia"), Bruce Hornsby gave surprisingly enjoyable renditions of two Grateful Dead staples, "Scarlet Begonias" and "I Know You Rider."

It was then, around midnight, that Springsteen came on to introduce the one surprise guest of the night: "Ladies and gentlemen, one of my favorites—Bob



Dylan." And Dylan was a surprise in more ways than one. Not only was he the only performer not on the bill, but he also seemed to be enjoying himself, picked some great songs, and best of all, his lyrics were somewhat intelligible. He went through knock-out arrangements of four of his songs: "All Along the Watchtower," "Just Like a Woman," "Highway 61 Revisited," and "Seeing the Real You at Last." It got even better as Dylan went for five, saying, "Now a buddy of mine's gonna come up and play one of my old songs: Mr. Bruce Springsteen." Springsteen and Dylan sharing the mic on "Forever Young" was one of those few moments that, despite any of the concert's mediocre stretches, made me feel extremely lucky to be in that audience. The sound of Dylan saying, "Lemme hear you say *Brooooooocce...*" alone would have made the entire night.

After the pair left the stage, the spotlight was on Booker T. and the MGs for their own "Green Onions." Fittingly, the Stax/Volt studio band that helped create the Memphis sound served as the backing band for many of the performers on this night; Fogerty introduced them as "the greatest rock 'n' roll band of all time."

Sam Moore came out for an enjoyable set, but he couldn't stop the concert from sliding rapidly downhill from there. Sitting through the next three acts was like running a gauntlet: the Allman Brothers with Sheryl Crow; Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora's well-meaning medley of "Imagine"/"Give Peace a Chance"; and Boz Scaggs and Slash joining forces on a tribute to Jimi Hendrix. Slash closed with a rousing, Spinal Tap-ish "Fuckin' good night, Cleveland!"

Even the superstars saved for the concert's end couldn't bring the show out of its downward spiral. James Brown, who did Hornsby one better by asking for a moment of silence for "Garcia and Mickey Mantle," ran through several of his classics; his set was complete with swirling dancers, but the whole thing seemed a little flat. Little Richard's performance never quite took off, either. Sam Moore and John Fogerty's struggle through "In the Midnight Hour" was like two drowning men holding each other up. Despite their best efforts, they couldn't save the song.

Technical problems compounded matters as Martha and the Vandellas came out for "Dancing in the Street," with a faulty microphone causing some false starts. This was the closest the show came to an all-star jam, with Nils on guitar, and Sheryl Crow, Jackson Browne, and Chrissie Hynde on backing vocals. Although, like Boz Scaggs and Slash, it was a grouping that seemed more like the result of a Surrealist's parlor game.

Which points to the greatest fault of the night. Concert planners had given the

impression that the show would be a once-in-a-lifetime gathering of rock legends to jam with their heroes and with each other. Producer Joel Gallen described the upcoming show to the *Akron Beacon Journal* as in "pretty much the same spirit of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame dinners, where artists will be collaborating with other artists.... The concert is not formatted like Woodstock or Live Aid, where everybody's just going to go up there and do a 45-minute set. You're going to see a lot of mixing and matching." For whatever reason, the concert didn't live up to that billing.

The clips from past induction dinners used as filler were actually some of the highlights of the show. With the Ghost of Concerts Past haunting the giant video screens between sets, the concert itself suffered by comparison. As charming and precious as Browne and Etheridge doing "Wake Up Little Susie" may have been, it couldn't compare to seeing Bruce and Mick Jagger facing off at the mic on "I Saw Her Standing There" with Ringo on drums and Dylan on guitar.

With the artists Springsteen and the E Streeters could have been tearing it up with—Eric Burdon, James Brown, John Fogerty, Little Richard, the list goes on—there was quite a bit of lost potential right there. Moreover, the stage should have been packed; not only should there have been a final all-star jam, the night should have been full of them. Some of the collaborations that did take place may have been disappointing, but worse, the individual acts suffered. Without anyone to feed off or play off, the usually effervescent Little Richard seemed like a deer caught in headlights. Even minor opportunities slipped right by; as long as Aretha was doing the lightweight "Freeway of Love," they could at least have brought Clarence onstage to take his sax solo. With all of these artists performing on one night, on the same stage, it wouldn't seem out of the question to bring them together.

Instead, Chuck Berry and Springsteen came back to bookend the show, from duck-walk to duck-walk, with "Rock and Roll Music." Unfortunately, Berry went right into the song and struggled with the words while Springsteen and the band were still trying to figure out what key he was playing in. Bruce's look of disbelief was remarkable. He seemed to be grimacing despite himself, looking as if he'd like to make himself very small. After the show he reportedly said something to this effect: "It was like getting in a bus and driving off the edge of a cliff; you knew you were going to hit bottom, and you knew it was going to take four minutes."

There actually was an all-star jam planned for the concert's end, supposedly "Come Together" and "Like a Rolling Stone." The E Street Band were reported-

ly waiting in the wings for a finale that never came. As far as I know there still hasn't been an official explanation as to why it didn't, although the *New York Daily News* reported that Chuck Berry stopped playing once he saw the HBO credits rolling on the monitors and immediately left the stage. I don't think I've really exaggerated how drastically the show went downhill during the last hour or two; it's understandable that they just wanted to call it a night.

The Hall of Fame Museum has taken a lot of criticism, mostly from those who feel that a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame should be, as Jon Stewart joked during his hosting of the evening for HBO, nothing more than "a trashed hotel room." In his review of the museum, critic Joel Selvin came to this conclusion: "Rock and Roll is dead, and they buried it in Cleveland." And even the rock band Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments, on their recent album, scream for "bombs away on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame!"

But spare the museum—it seems to me those bombs would be better spent on bloated stadium shows. As Max Weinberg said at the press conference, the museum "is just spectacular. You know, there's a lot of discipline and work that goes into making rock 'n' roll music spontaneous. You have to do your homework. And that's what the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has done—their homework. It's educational, it's historical, it's entertaining." Rock 'n' roll clearly lives on—it just has a bad night once in a while. Though rock 'n' roll will have its ups and downs as it always has, to finally have a place dedicated to preserving the best of it is literally like a dream come true. 🍌

HEY HO ROCK 'N' ROLL: BRUCE AND THE E STREET BAND

•9/2/95

Johnny B. Goode
with Chuck Berry

Shake, Rattle and Roll
She's the One

Great Balls of Fire
Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On
with Jerry Lee Lewis

Darkness on the Edge of Town

Forever Young
Springsteen with Bob Dylan

Rock 'n' Roll Music
Springsteen with Chuck Berry

Cleveland Stadium, Cleveland, OH

JOE GRUSHECKY

& the Houserockers

BUILDING BRIDGES

It's around 10 p.m. on a weeknight at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park. John Eddie has just warmed up the crowd with his Elvis-inspired take on the bar band sound. Many more people than the local fire laws allow are squeezing about the room in anticipation of the man who "built" the place—Bruce Springsteen.

The Boss is expected to lend a helping hand to his good friend Joe Grushecky, a fellow working-class hero, albeit unsung. Having produced and contributed material and performances to Grushecky's latest album, *American Babylon*, on Razor & Tie, Springsteen is going to extra lengths by serving as a temporary member of the 47-year-old Pittsburgh-based artist's band, the Houserockers. The Pony is the first house they will rock on a six-date, five-city tour that will include a weekend jaunt through the rootsy outfit's blue-collar hometown.

Because the wasted industry of steel means to Pittsburgh what closed factories and

a lack of tourism mean respectively to Freehold and Asbury Park, Grushecky and Springsteen share similar backgrounds economically as well as musically. The difference is that when Springsteen sang about his "hometown," folks listened. Grushecky's luck was much tougher.

Described as "the best hard rock band in the country" in a 1980 *Village Voice* review by Greil Marcus, The Iron City Houserockers, as they were originally called, released four albums on MCA from 1979 to 1983. In an age of synthesized soul and easy-come, easy-go financial freedom, however, the '80s did not treat Grushecky and his group as well as Springsteen or even the San Francisco bar band counterpart, Huey Lewis & the News.

"We got that bar band tag," Joe says. "Some people look down their nose at it. If

you look at any of our albums, we've done pretty good work throughout. The lyrics have always been pretty strong. The music's always rocked pretty good. Everything's pretty honest, you know, tough music."

Despite the hard work and equally hard rock, "Grushecky made the mistake of writing great songs about working-class trauma during a Wall Street boom," wrote David Fricke in a *Rolling Stone* review of the 1992 Razor & Tie debut, *End of the Century*.

After the Iron City Houserockers broke up in 1984—the same year Springsteen's *Born in the USA* broke sales records—Grushecky spent five frustrating years "getting back to basics." A deal with the roots-oriented Rounder label resulted in two critically acclaimed LPs, 1989's *Rock and Real* and 1991's *Swimming With the Sharks*.



By Robert Makin

"After that, things started falling together," says Grushecky, "But at the same time, with each additional member to my family, I felt more financial burden to support them. My kids had bad allergies and asthma. My wife, who was really carrying the load with a full-time job, had to stay home and take care of the kids, so I had to take over the load by teaching."

"So I taught during the day, and I taught at night, helping people to get their GED's, their high school diplomas. Yet, through it all, I was able to keep making records and play. I did that for like five years. Looking back on it, I sometimes amaze myself how I got through it all, but we always believed in what we were doing. Even though it got very, very difficult to do at times, I just never lost sight of that."

"On a positive note, having a full-time job, I never had to stoop to doing something I didn't want to do to make money playing music like so many guys have to do. So I just basically toughed it out until we got a break."

That break finally came in 1992, when Grushecky, who had jumped from Rounder to Razor & Tie, rejuvenated his friendship with Springsteen during a Pittsburgh date on the *Lucky Town* tour.

More than a decade had passed since they'd met at Clarence Clemons' Red Bank nightclub, Big Man's West. At the time, Grushecky was touring in support of his second album, the 1980 masterpiece, *Have a Good Time (But Get Out Alive)*. The record was produced by another E Streeter, Steve Van Zandt, along with Mott the Hoople's Mick Ronson and Ian Hunter. Given the connection to Clarence and Steve, the paths of the future collaborators were bound to cross that night. Ever since, Springsteen has looked the Houserocker up while in Pittsburgh, often jamming together either in a bar or an arena.

About the Iron City suddenly becoming Lucky Town, Grushecky explains, "We had a good time as usual. A couple of months later, when I was talking to my wife about getting started on a new record, she mentioned, 'Well, why don't you give Bruce a call and see if he can help you out?'"

"I hate to ask people to do me favors. It took me a while to come to grips with asking him to do it. But eventually I called Jon Landau and Jon called Bruce. One thing led to another, and boom, boom, boom."

Two years and many informal recording sessions later, that's exactly how Grushecky's set with Springsteen at the Stone Pony can be described—"boom, boom, boom." All-American music that's as raw, energetic and sincere as punk rock bounces off the stage in waves, drenching the crowd in a beer-soaked sweat and wrapping them in a towel of tough love. As Springsteen and Grushecky vibe off of a glorious cover of Van Morrison's "Brown Eyed Girl," the hard-working, road-weary rockers seem 20 years younger, especially around the eyes which are wide with excitement. For a moment, Springsteen looks as wild and innocent as when in a serious Morri-

son phase during the making of his second album.

"Everybody grew up listening to the same kind of music: soul, blues, R&B," says Grushecky of Springsteen, as well as of his bandmates: guitarist Bill Thoms, percussionist Bernie Herr, drummer Joffo Simmons, keyboardist Joe Pelesky, and bassist Art Nardini, who co-founded the original Houserockers in 1976.

"Those kinds of influences were inescapable," Grushecky continues, "that combination of black and white music. It was just a moment in time when there was tons and tons of great music. People ask me who was my favorite, I can't even begin to tell you. I loved all of it, from Stax and Motown and Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf to Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Stones and the Byrds. I just soaked up as much as I could, and I think Bruce and Southside and guys like that were probably playing the same type of music on the Shore that we were playing in Pittsburgh. You can listen to Bruce and me and tell where each others' influences are coming from. We have pretty much similar taste."

Good time nostalgia isn't the only reason why the Boss chose to join Grushecky at the creative hip. He obviously also wanted to help swing the talent-opportunity pendulum in a favorable direction for his roots-rocking friend.

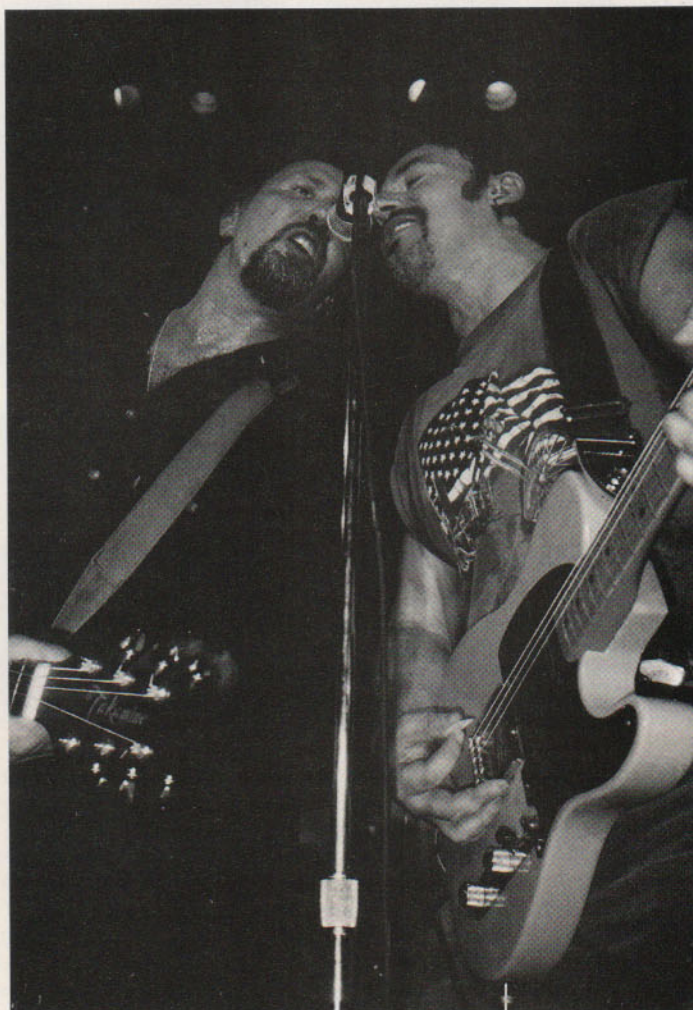
"Joe's a tremendous musician and writer," Springsteen told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "and his music contains an entire community of women, children, men, work, Saturday night. That was a common place that Joe and I were coming from. That's partly what makes this album so satisfying to me. When Joe brought in a piece of music, I could instantly relate to it, like, 'Whoa, that's a good line. I wish I had written that.' It was enjoyable working with material that I had a deep feeling for."

"It's funny," he continues, "there's a lot of talent, certain great songwriters, where the bridge to the audience didn't get made. And I don't know if it's the fault of the music

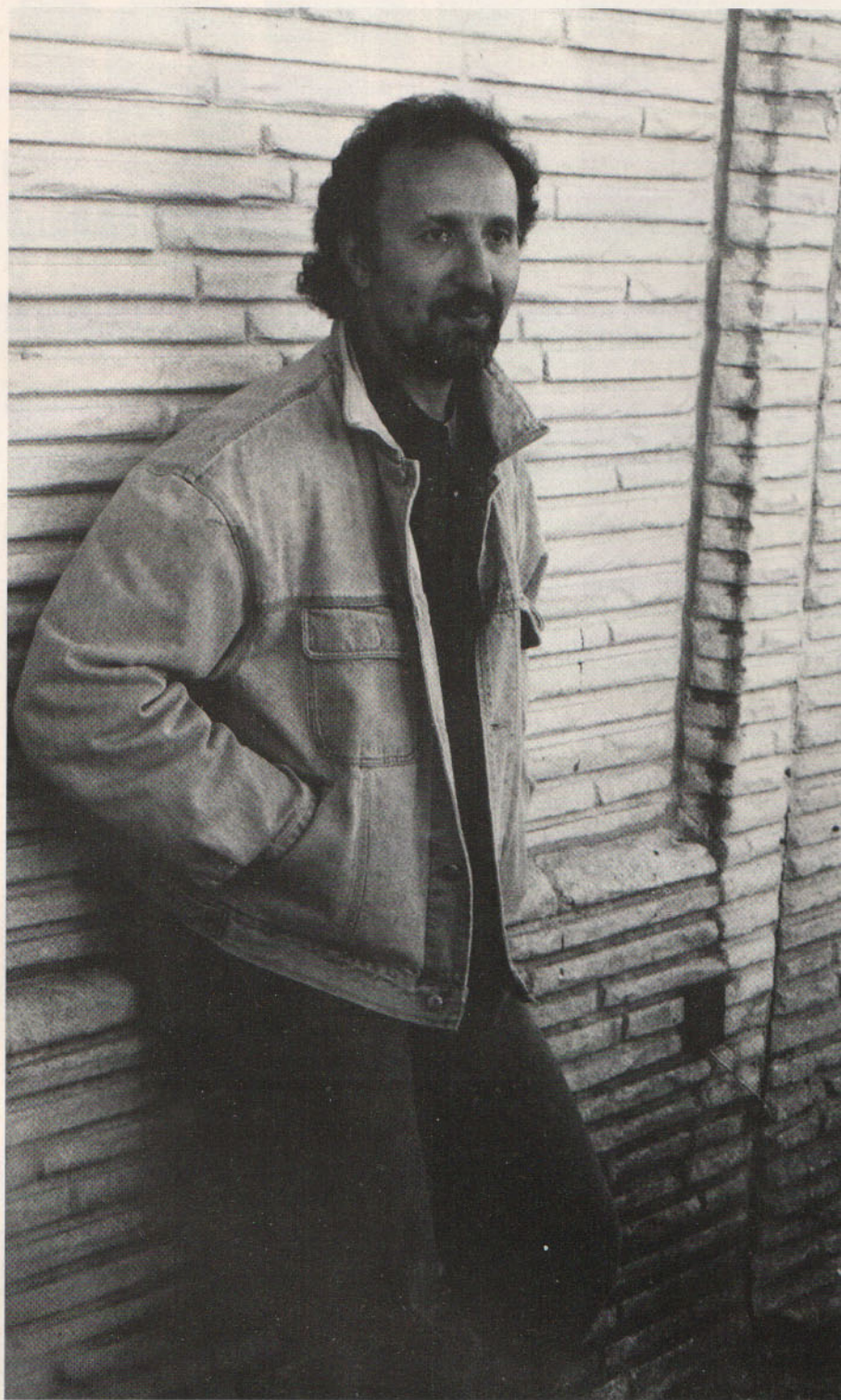
business and the way it's set up, or not the right song at the right time. I don't know if there's an element of luck involved, but to get to the place where you have an audience that you sustain, and sustains you, that's sort of the make-or-break spot. Joe's a tremendous musician and writer, and part of our goal is to make that bridge and allow him to sustain himself with his music."

Standing by his convictions, Springsteen collaborated on two songs for *American Babylon*: a dustbowl ballad called "Homestead" and the full-on American history of "Dark and Bloody Ground." Both tracks would have contributed greatly to the stark, *Nebraska*-like quality of Springsteen's forthcoming LP, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, but instead, he opted to let them enhance the tough, sweeping charm of *American Babylon*'s touching wake-up call.

Only the second time Springsteen has produced an album for another artist (he co-helmed Gary U.S. Bonds' *Dedication* with Steve Van Zandt in the early '80s), *American Babylon* serves as a showcase for basic American rock 'n' roll, values, and the passion its creators have for both. The message of the fire-and-brimstone title track, inspired by Grushecky's teaching emotionally disturbed



A "Labor of Love": Joe and Bruce in Chicago, 10/24/95



children in Pittsburgh's inner city, is particularly enlightening.

"It's a breakdown," the songwriter explains. "If you look up 'Babylon' in the dictionary, it says, 'A society that is dedicated to materialism and sensualism.' I was working with real difficult kids in the inner city. You read their case histories, it's like one horror story after another. Unimaginable things have happened to these kids. It's taking a sarcastic view. When you say, 'Who cares about the kids? I don't.'... Well, obviously I did, because

I worked in that type of job for a long time.

"It's a whole different world, a whole different lifestyle for those kids. The level of neglect and abuse that is heaped upon children, not just in the inner city—the terrible stories of neglect and abuse just seem like a complete breakdown of the human spirit. It's not just in the inner cities. It's a thing that runs across all kinds of color lines.

"When you work with that, if you have any kind of feelings, it colors the way you see things. You say, 'Oh my God, do these things

actually happen to people?' And yes they do, to hundreds of people.' Those kids come out warped and bring a whole different set of values and behavior to the table. It can be very frightening at times when you realize how much is going on out there.

"As with any generation, you have to look at your kids—and your kids' kids—and hope that somehow things are different for them," Grushecky continues. "Like every mom and dad has thought, I'd like things to be better for my kids, but at the same time, you have to be involved with your children, your community, politics to some extent—you have to vote. There are little things that you can do to make things better, and I think everybody has to commit to that. There's real yearning for people to do that; I don't think anybody's really tapped into that yet. You see so much disaffection through the general populace, even though things economically are pretty good. But people just don't seem satisfied with the way the country's going.

"You have to be involved, you have to be human, you have to be spiritual, you have to be kind. You have to do all those things. When that starts happening, then things will start changing."

At press time, it was not determined which of *American Babylon's* dozen tracks would translate to video. Springsteen, despite having a new album of his own to promote, has promised continued support with a brief appearance in the soon-to-be-produced clip.

Given the fact that the news segments of MTV and VH-1 extensively covered Springsteen's participation in the initial promotion of *American Babylon*, Razor & Tie spokesperson Marc Fenton is confident the music stations will continue to cooperate. "There's lots of potential," he adds. "Right now, we're concentrating on getting Joe out on the road."

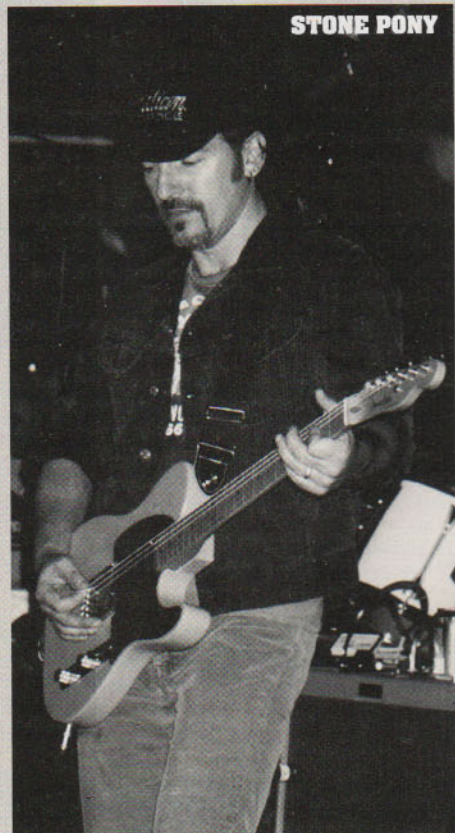
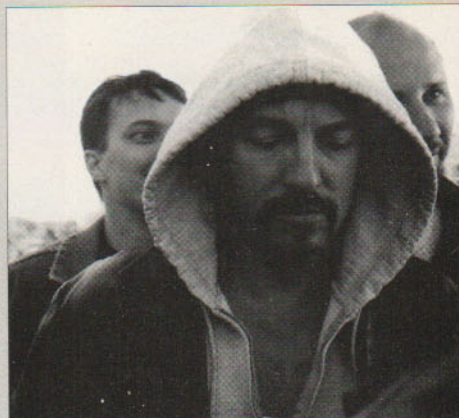
The hard-working Grushecky, who recently resigned his teaching post, assures us that he's "going to give music a full shot" with the release of *American Babylon*. "I'm really excited about it," he continues, "I thought it was really great when we were making it. I hope it's something that people will get a chance to listen to, then maybe go back and pick up on some of the earlier stuff.

"It's hard to struggle through," he adds. "Just because something's popular doesn't mean it's good. Just because something's good doesn't mean it's popular. It's always a crap shoot. But, hey, you know, I'm not complaining right now."

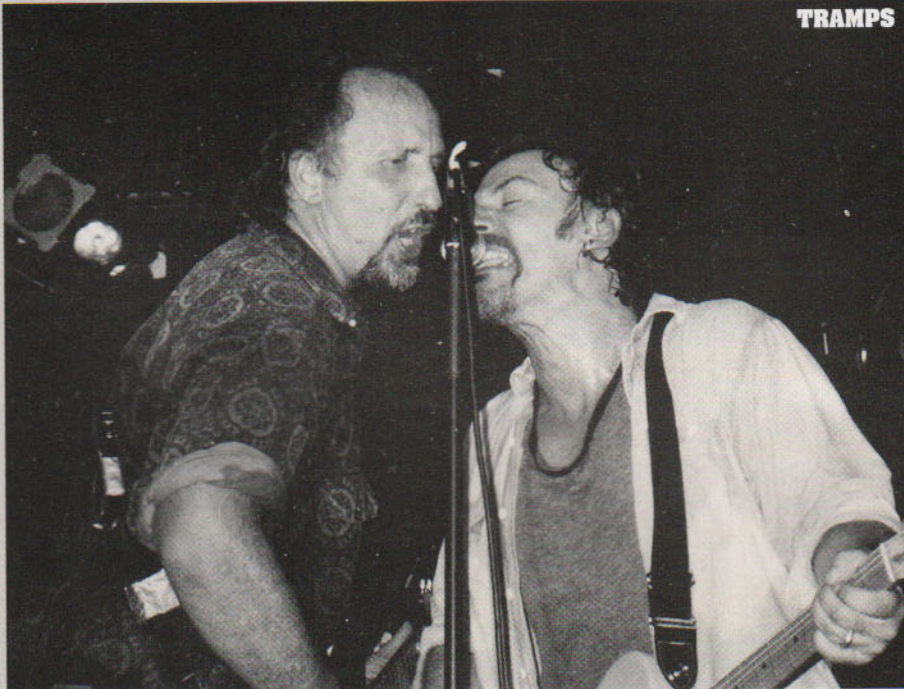
One thing's for sure, Grushecky has a home away from home at the Stone Pony. As the high-voltage evening comes to an end, chants of "Joe! Joe! Joe! Joe!" rival, if not outweigh, howls for Bruce. Moments later, as fans congregate around the tour bus parked outside the club, one can only hope that Grushecky's road to glory will be as meaningful as his music and that his luck won't be as tough. 🐾

THE OCTOBER ASSAULT

In October, Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers kicked off the release of *American Babylon* with a six-stop tour dubbed the "October Assault." That Bruce Springsteen would appear at some of the shows was referred to in several papers as "the worst-kept secret in rock 'n' roll," but the real surprise was that Springsteen actually made it to every single gig. Introduced as "honorary Houserocker of the week" on the first night, Springsteen joined the band for the majority of the set on all six dates. While demonstrating his most fiery guitar work in years and sharing vocals with Grushecky, Springsteen was clearly determined to keep the focus on Joe's work. Two Springsteen songs—"Murder Incorporated" and "Light of Day"—were performed every night, but the set lists were otherwise dominated by Grushecky's compositions, with a few covers thrown in. At each show, Springsteen came out for *American Babylon*'s "What Did You Do in the War?" (see set lists below) and remained on stage for the rest of the set.



STONE PONY



TRAMPS

THE STONE PONY ASBURY PARK, NJ 10/17/95

No Strings Attached
Swimming With the Sharks
Junior's Bar
Only Lovers Left Alive
Have a Good Time But Get Out Alive
What Did You Do in the War
Talking to the King
Chain Smokin'
Labor of Love
Never Be Enough Time
Murder Incorporated
Mustang Sally
Dark and Bloody Ground
Pumping Iron
American Babylon
Homestead
Light of Day
Brown Eyed Girl
Down the Road Apiece
Rebel Music

Soundcheck Notes: A four-hour rehearsal at the Pony the night before included "Folsom Prison Blues," "Gimme Shelter," and an extended lesson from Springsteen on "Light of Day." After the rehearsal, Springsteen told Eric Deggans of the *Asbury Park Press*, "We'd like to give this record a good little kickoff.... I don't think we'll get booed off the stage. We might get a few bottles thrown at us, but we can handle that." Tuesday's soundcheck included Eric Clapton's "Crossroads" with Springsteen taking lead guitar and vocals.

John's comments: Bruce's playing cannot be described. After seeing this inspired playing, I can say I am a little disappointed with the upcoming solo acoustic tour—I never thought I'd say that! That long-awaited "guitar" album looks as though it's ready to bust out of him right now—it would be a shame to put that on the shelf and have him forget about it over time.

Steve's comments: Bruce was in fine form and looked to be enjoying himself immensely. The crowd went wild with a roaring "Murder Incorporated." "Light of Day" was unbelievable—as good if not better than on the last tour—and Bruce played the solos with a vengeance.

Press: Jay Lustig, writing in the *Newark Star-Ledger*: "The first song Springsteen and Grushecky performed together, 'What Did You Do in the War,' set the tone for the rest of the show. Vocals were gruff and soulful, and the guitars were ragged. The song seemed rehearsed, but with room for some give and take. Springsteen's guitar solo, laced with feedback and machine gun riffs, seemed like a response to the question asked in the song's title."

"And so the show proceeded, with Springsteen sensitively echoing the lyrics of each song with his solos. His solo on 'Dark and Bloody Ground,' for instance, gave voice to the anguish of the stoic, hard-bitten characters Grushecky sang about."

TRAMPS NEW YORK, NY 10/18/95

No Strings Attached
Swimming With the Sharks
Comin' Down Maria
Junior's Bar
Only Lovers Left Alive
What Did You Do in the War
Talking to the King
Chain Smokin'



Will the real Bruce please stand up? Bruce meets his younger self outside the Pony, 10/17/95.

Labor of Love
Never Be Enough Time
Murder Incorporated
Mustang Sally
Dark and Bloody Ground
Pumping Iron
American Babylon
Homestead
Light of Day
The Wanderer
Down the Road Apiece
Rebel Music

Press: Melinda Newman, writing in *Billboard*: "Five songs into the set Springsteen appeared, and it felt like the temperature in the already-swelting room rose another 50 degrees. Springsteen instantly took over as bandleader just by his sheer presence.... The music courses through Springsteen's body and out through the guitar."

Dan Aquilante, writing in the *New York Post*: "In spite of what you think of Springsteen the superstar, on stage he is just another guy in the band. Bruce was without question the night's MVP and the man most of the audience hoped would show up as a 'surprise guest'; still there was never a moment when Springsteen was anything but humble, never attempting to swipe any of Joe's fire. In fact, when he first took the stage 20 minutes into the set, and the crowd chanted, 'Bruuuuuuce,' he gently requested that they, 'Cut that shit out.'"

"Later, Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Famer Dion DiMucci stepped out of the audience to sing his macho classic, 'The Wanderer.' Although he paced his signature song deliberately, his vocal swagger inspired Joe and the Boss to do some guitar posing of their own. Almost everyone has a story about the most incredible things they've seen at a rock show, and

diminutive Dion 'Wandering' in his newsboy cap, backed by sweat-drenched Springsteen playing a fiery lead and lanky Joe G. strumming an acoustic guitar in what he dubbed 'Greaser Heaven,' has to be one of those moments."

ELECTRIC FACTORY PHILADELPHIA, PA 10/19/95

No Strings Attached
Swimming With the Sharks
Comin' Down Maria
Only Lovers Left Alive
What Did You Do in the War
Talking to the King
Chain Smokin'
Labor of Love
Never Be Enough Time
Murder Incorporated
Mustang Sally
Dark and Bloody Ground
Pumping Iron
American Babylon
Homestead
Light of Day
Brown Eyed Girl
Down the Road Apiece
Rebel Music

Soundcheck notes: Included an instrumental "Streets of Philadelphia" with harmonica, and a snippet of "Cadillac Ranch." Bruce's driver went to his truck to get a cassette of "Streets" for the band to listen to beforehand. Concerned about the acoustics, Springsteen spent a good part of the short soundcheck walking around all parts of the venue to check out the sound.

Tom's comments: Joe introduced Bruce as "A man whose glory days have just begun."

Everyone was yelling "Bruuuuuuce," and Bruce yelled, "Shut up!" In general, Bruce was a lot looser and had more contact with the audience. This show blew the Pony away. The stage was a lot bigger, and Bruce was all over it.

Joe's comments: Another fantastic show. Bruce was in great spirits, really into it (there were some who said that it looked like he was having more fun at the Factory but played better at the Pony). The Electric Factory is a converted old warehouse, so the sound was a little different than at most bars. The stage was about five feet high with a four-foot platform directly in front of it—during "Rebel Music," Bruce, Joe, and guitarist Bill Thoms leapt onto the platform and went wild for a few minutes. At one point, Bruce and Joe shared some chugs from the same beer bottle. Someone in the crowd asked for a beer, Bruce tossed it underhand and my friend Jeremy caught it. He got it signed by Bruce after the show and now it's his most prized possession—an autographed bottle of Coors Light.

NICK'S FAT CITY PITTSBURGH, PA 10/20/95

No Strings Attached
Swimming With the Sharks
Comin' Down Maria
Only Lovers Left Alive
What Did You Do in the War
Talking to the King
Chain Smokin'
Labor of Love
Never Be Enough Time
Murder Incorporated
Junior's Bar
Mustang Sally
Dark and Bloody Ground
Pumping Iron
American Babylon
Homestead
Light of Day
Down the Road Apiece
Rebel Music
Lighten Up

Dave's comments: The crowd was great and broke into chants of "Joe! Joe! Joe!" At one point even Bruce was chanting along. This is the most intense guitar playing I've ever seen from Bruce, but he also seemed to enjoy sitting back and letting Joe take all the cheering.



A happy fan in a Philly sandwich, 10/19/95.

PARK WEST

PARK WEST CHICAGO, IL 10/24/95

No Strings Attached
Comin' Down Maria
Only Lovers Left Alive
What Did You Do in the War
Talking to the King
Chain Smokin'
Labor of Love
Never Be Enough Time
Murder Incorporated
Mustang Sally
Dark and Bloody Ground
Pumping Iron
American Babylon
Homestead
Light of Day
Brown Eyed Girl
Down the Road Apiece
Rebel Music
I Hear You Knockin'

Sheila's comments: The opening band, Joe D'Urso and Stone Caravan, were very good. They played for forty minutes and even did a cover of "Johnny Bye Bye."

Ben and Julie's comments: It was after the third song that Grushecky made the introduction I was waiting for: "Ladies and gentleman, it's star time—tonight we have with us a New Jersey resident who brought you 'Born to Run' and 'Born in the USA,' here he is straight from the 'Streets of Philadelphia' and his 'Glory Days' have just begun... please welcome Bruce Springsteen."

Phil's Comments: I've seen Bruce 34 times, and I would say this show had to rate in the top ten. I had heard that Bruce wanted to be just in the background, playing guitar, but to me and guys around me, he and Joe were out front pretty equally. Lots of guitar playing, seemed like the old Bruce.

Press: Lloyd Sachs, writing in the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "This was a seamless, powerhouse

performance of raging guitars, bruising working-class laments and all-out party music. Grushecky and Springsteen share a passion for and encyclopedic knowledge of soul and R&B. Unleashed via their harmonies and vocal exchanges on Grushecky's 'Never Be Enough Time,' it resulted in one of the greatest Sam and Dave homages you'll ever hear."

Greg Kot, writing in the *Chicago Tribune*: "Playing more lead guitar than at any time since the 1978 *Darkness on the Edge of Town* tour, Springsteen blended elements of Freddy King's slashing, string-bending whine and Jeff Beck's postmodern, fret-hopping drama, without the technical facility of either. But his tone is singularly passionate, a Harley-Davidson stutter and roar like no other guitarist's."

"At times, Grushecky, Springsteen and Houserocker Bill Thoms gave the music a formidable, three-deep guitar front line. And their interplay lifted Grushecky's 'Never Be Enough Time' into an epic brawl that segued into Springsteen's "Murder Incorporated," the night's most thrilling sequence, and later a churning 'Light of Day.'

"If at times, as on 'Dark and Bloody Ground,' the music lumbered under its own earnest weight, the burden was thrown off by covers of 'Mustang Sally' and 'Brown Eyed Girl.' It was a night of two pals bashing it out for fun, the disparity in their careers briefly irrelevant. As Grushecky and Springsteen bearhugged at the end, it was difficult to determine who was more grateful."

Judging by the number of reports we received, at least half of the audience at these shows must have been *Backstreets* subscribers. Special thanks to everyone who faxed and sent in comments and photos—don't forget to keep 'em coming as Springsteen's solo tour gets underway! We'll have full tour coverage in the next issue, and the reports, photos, set lists, ticket stubs, etc. that we receive from our readers are essential. Many thanks!

—Compiled by Christopher Phillips

NICK'S FAT CITY PITTSBURGH, PA 10/21/95

No Strings Attached
Comin' Down Maria
Only Lovers Left Alive
What Did You Do in the War
Talking to the King
Diddy Wah Diddy
Chain Smokin'
Labor of Love
Never Be Enough Time
Murder Incorporated
Mustang Sally
Gimme Shelter
Dark and Bloody Ground
Pumping Iron
American Babylon
Homestead
Light of Day
Down the Road Apiece
Rebel Music
I Hear You Knockin'

Dave's comments: The crowd, though great on both nights, seemed to be there more for Bruce than on the night before. But I think this show was slightly better than the night before, because the band seemed to feel at home with Bruce. He seemed to be really enjoying himself, laughing and playing around with all the Houserockers. Bruce was having problems with his straps on both of his guitars, which led him to say, "You know, I'm in the band for only a week... and they break my guitars... a beer freezes my amps... and my fingers are bleeding!" Joe said, "Yeah, it's the hardest work he's done in five years," to which Bruce replied, "I'll let you get away with that in Pittsburgh."

PARK WEST



A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

THE 1995 BRIDGE SCHOOL BENEFIT

By Erik D. Flannigan

Beginning with his original appearance at the 1986 Bridge School charity concert, Bruce Springsteen's rare (until this year's tour, that is) acoustic performances have arguably been, from an artistic standpoint, his finest moments of the last decade. From the stunning "Born in the USA" of the



first Bridge show to the transcendent new arrangement of "Darkness on the Edge of Town" from 1990's *Christic* shows in L.A., these one-off acoustic gigs have been the defining moments of his recent career. So given the track record of excellence, it did come as something of a surprise that Springsteen's 1995 spot at Neil Young's Bridge School charity concert did not follow in that tradition.

There are two major reasons why, one of which was outside of Springsteen's control. To those paying attention at the show, the p.a. was experiencing major sound problems during Emmylou Harris' marvelous set which preceded Bruce. It appeared that the vocal microphone was cutting out from time to time, and the left side of the sound system was also behaving erratically. Unconscionably, nothing was done to correct matters prior to Springsteen taking the stage.

Before he had even finished his first song, "Seeds," the sound was faltering; for many, the frustration of the problem (and the fact the Springsteen continued on unaware of it) broke the mood for good. At the end of "Seeds," a substantial portion of the audience in the first section began yelling to alert Bruce to poor sound, but he pressed on. Even when the system was not dropping out, compared to Neil Young's performance later in the evening, Bruce sounded distant and muddled.

But even if the sound had been perfect, and not overlook-

ing the striking debut performances of "Sinaloa Cowboys" and "The Ghost of Tom Joad," this year's Bridge show was still something of a misfire. For the first time in recent memory, Springsteen appeared to be unprepared to play at his best. As silly as it sounds, even his physical appearance—a nondescript shirt and a baseball cap pulled tightly down to his eyes—suggested he was closed off, and not in a full-blown performance mode.

What he delivered, again excluding the two new songs, was a kind of warmed-over version of his Europe '93 show-opening acoustic sets. As he took the stage, he placed lyric sheets on both sides of the microphone, settled himself, and launched into "Seeds," which ironically, had premiered in its acoustic arrangement at the first Bridge concert almost ten years earlier. Sound problems aside, the version was a mixed bag, functionally the same as the arrangement of two years ago, but not up to the standard of the best of those European performances.

Next up was "Adam Raised a Cain," a song which is completely transformed in its acoustic rendition. Again, against the standard set in Europe '93, Bruce's Bridge version was good, but not great. He was relying heavily on his lyric sheets, a shift in focus which compromised the song's intensity. There was a bit of uneasiness, and he didn't seem to be "playing out," that is, really delivering the song, so much as giving it a reading.

The set picked up dramatically with "Sinaloa Cowboys," the first song to be heard in any form from the new album. Because the crowd was concentrating so hard to hear the lyrics and digest their meaning, Springsteen was able to bridge the gap between himself and his audience much more successfully than on the prior two songs. No one had heard the song before, yet Bruce was at ease performing it, and really took his time.

That cannot be said for "Point Blank." After a very deliberate flip of his lyric sheets, and a comment to the effect of "I'll give this one a try," Springsteen blew



through what might be graciously termed a lackluster version of "Point Blank." What some have called a "radical new arrangement" was in fact a rushed, ragged and recited performance. He relied on lyric sheets, and once he started, he looked to be just trying get through to the end. Compared to its stinging airing in Europe '93, "Point Blank" at the Bridge was a fizzle.

Surprisingly, Springsteen picked the show back up with a lively rendition of "This Hard Land." The sound began to cooperate, and after the struggle of "Point Blank," Bruce was much more at home with the song. And, thanks to *Greatest Hits*, so too was the crowd, who reacted warmly to it.

Yet the highlight of the night was "The Ghost of Tom Joad." With a biting introduction/indictment from Bruce, as political as any on-stage speech in his career, and a direct dedication to "the Gingrich Mob," Bruce brought "The Ghost of Tom Joad" to life. Ensnared as we were in the Shoreline Amphitheatre, which sits on a barren tract

of land that was once a landfill, the song took on a desolate, lonely air.

The audience was enraptured and Springsteen was again at ease, delivering his latest work with an assured, heartfelt vocal. When the song ended, he walked off, just when it felt like he had finally gotten rolling. Why was he on so early in the night, anyway? And why such a short set? My guess is it was his choice. With his new album imminent and the rehearsals for his acoustic tour yet to commence, he was not prepared to deliver a long set. As it turned out, he was not even all that comfortable with a few of the songs he did play, and may have assumed that because he had played these same songs acoustically in the recent past, that they would come back to him easily. Also, the fact that beyond the new songs, Springsteen didn't play anything he hadn't previously done acoustically (except the two new songs), suggests that he did not spend a great deal of time designing his brief appearance.

The audience, perhaps sensing that Springsteen was finally warmed up, called him back for an encore. Again, one can only speculate, the encore also appeared to be a moment he wasn't ready for. Bruce and Neil had done "Down by the River" together before, and probably agreed that they could pull it off if the situation arose. It did, and they didn't. Bruce did little in the duet, chiming in only on the chorus, and occasionally picking his guitar. It was sloppy, and felt like an afterthought, which it undoubtedly was. At least the sound was clear.

But in spite of any bad circumstances, Springsteen was in good spirits. His spontaneous verse of "I Don't Want No More of this Army Life," and jokes about the World Series loyalties of Darius Rucker and Chrissie Hynde were good natured and he seemed happy to be there. That may come through more on tapes of the show, separated from the intense frustration of wanting another Christic-caliber performance, and instead getting a poor-sounding mixed bag. 🐼

THAT CONFOUNDED BRIDGE

• 10/28/95

Seeds

Adam Raised a Cain

Sinaloa Cowboys

Point Blank

This Hard Land

The Ghost of Tom Joad

Down By the River

w/ Neil Young

Rockin' in the Free World

w/ Neil Young, et al.

Shoreline Amphitheatre,
Mountain View, CA



ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN BRUCE Springsteen's career early in 1995 was a surprise, most notably the reforming of the E Street Band for new studio sessions, the decision to put together the *Greatest Hits* record, and Bruce continuing to win awards, including a Grammy Award, for "Streets of Philadelphia." But perhaps no surprise is bigger than the news that the normally media-shy Springsteen allowed a documentary film crew into the studio during the making of *Greatest Hits*. Word first leaked of this in the summer of 1995 when Springsteen's management began trying to figure out just what to do with the completed film. Confirmation came in Springsteen's interview with the *New York Times* in early summer when writer Neil Strauss refers to "a documentary being put together from 23 hours of film that were shot while the E Street Band was recording the new songs last winter." Strauss mentions several scenes in his piece: When the band gives Clarence Clemons a cake on his birthday and he gushes, "This is the best present a person could have for his birthday, being among you guys," and a vote by studio personnel on whether to use the take of "Secret Garden" with strings. Bruce himself referred to the film in a couple of offhand comments during his club-hopping during the summer saying they had hours of footage done and he didn't know what was going to happen with it.

Those hours were eventually whittled down and by late summer a completed movie was readied. Titled *Blood Brothers*, the film was directed by noted documentary producer Ernie Fritz. The cut that began to be circulated in late September was 80 minutes. Sources suggest that director Fritz was pushing for a small theatrical showing for the movie in the U.S. (opening up in art houses in a handful of selected cities), while others speculated that the film might be sold to HBO or Showtime. There was talk of a network television airing at some point in the U.S., perhaps along the lines of the Beatles special on ABC, but any showing most likely would be in 1996. At press time, a report had the Disney Channel in the U.K. interested in showing the project, but no other airing could be confirmed (a promotional poster for the filmed was issued in England).

Whatever form the movie is finally released in, an advance viewing confirmed that *Blood Brothers* is a film that will greatly interest Springsteen fans, and anyone who find the recording process intriguing. Within the Springsteen world, this movie is the most intimate and up-close look that fans have ever had into how Bruce works in the studio, a chapter of his history that previously has gone undocumented.

Remember that prior to the filming of *Blood Brothers*, Springsteen rarely even let still photographers into the recording studio and, in fact, only a handful of photos exist of Bruce or the E Street Band working on their many records. Though a couple of photos of Bruce and Jon Landau in the studio were on the sleeve of *The River*, the impression that Springsteen has always given is that the recording process is private, and not the place he welcomed inquiring minds with cameras in tow. But Fritz and his small camera crew appear to have been given complete access for *Blood Brothers* and the result allows the viewer to be a fly on the wall during these historic sessions.

Perhaps most interesting to fans of Bruce Springsteen's music are the three songs in the film that were recorded during the *Greatest Hits* sessions but were unreleased. Though Springsteen has frequently used outtakes on b-sides or import CDs, having three unreleased songs from such a short session is unusual, and hearing (and seeing) them performed in *Blood Brothers* is almost too good to be true. The three songs are also ones that weren't even rumored before: "Without You," "High Hopes," and "Back in Your Arms Again."

THE MOVIE BEGINS WITH SHORT INTERVIEWS WITH the members of the E Street Band (interestingly, all the members of the band do brief interviews with Fritz with the exception of Roy Bittan). The film starts with footage of Bruce teaching the band how to play the song "Blood Brothers." The band listens intently, and Nils Lofgren is seen taking notes.

The film is broken into short segments and the first segment is titled "Day One, The Hit Factory." Landau gives a brief interview and talks about how quickly the sessions have come together. "We decided on the idea last Thursday," Landau tells Fritz, "and everybody was here on Monday. Today is Tuesday." Landau can't help but have a small smile break over his face. What viewers are seeing is something that has come together very quickly (and one would assume that the documentary was probably a last second decision since the sessions were arranged so hastily). But for a quickly arranged session, things seem to go together very easily, for the most part.

Bruce is seen drafting out lyrics on a yellow legal pad. At one point he jokes, "What the hell are we doing here?" It's one of many jokes that permeate the movie and the overall mood in the studio is one of jubilation and good humor, a far cry from the tense studio sessions of the '70s and '80s. The band then breaks into one of several takes of "Blood Brothers" that are included in the film.

Within the first four minutes of the movie, it's apparent that the Bruce Springsteen Fritz captures is not the same man who wouldn't even allow any pictures of himself with a smile to appear during the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* era. Though Springsteen is very serious when he comes to putting the songs on tape, he seems elated during much of the filming, particularly at the beginning, and he jokes frequently with the camera. He is seen wearing a porkpie hat which ends up becoming the subject of much of his conversation. "Back when this was a band that wore hats..." he says, joshing with the E Streeters. A little later he confesses that the hat is distracting him. "I'm going to take this hat off—it's influencing my behavior."

Soon the band is back to rehearsing "Blood Brothers" and at this point we get an almost complete version, though a different take than that released on the album. This version is slightly slower and includes lyric changes like the line "playing king of the mountain on West End," a reference, incidentally, to the street that Bruce lived on when he wrote "Born to Run." This take of "Blood Brothers" is interspersed with interviews with Nils, Max Weinberg, and Danny Federici. Max explains the emotions behind this reunion: "When the band broke up, I realized I wouldn't get to play this music again." Lofgren talks about how he has never had the

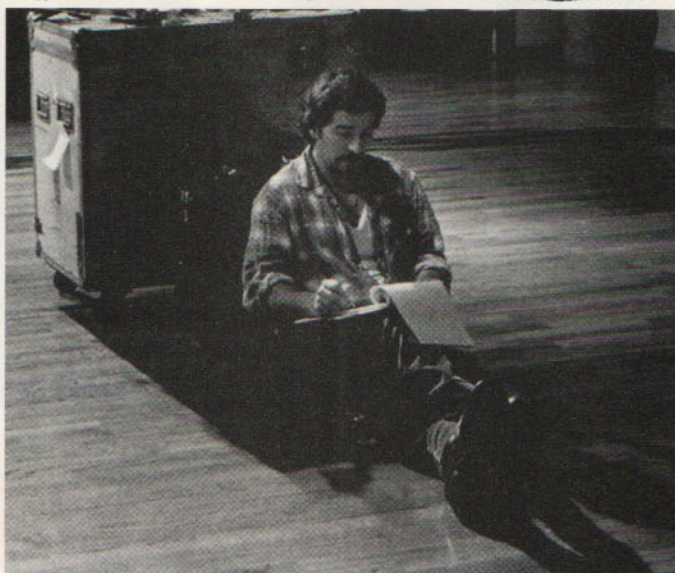
opportunity to record with the full E Street Band and Bruce in the studio, so he's excited about the possibility. This is followed by a bit more of "Blood Brothers," yet another take. During the course of the film, a half dozen different takes of "Blood Brothers" are sampled.

The rehearsals then turn to the first unreleased song of the film, "High Hopes." This song is an upbeat number, and one that interestingly was not written by Springsteen. At the end of the film, it is credited as "recorded by Bruce Springsteen, words by Tim McConnell" and a copyright date of 1987 is given. The song, however, is included on a 1990 Elektra album titled *The Havalinas* by McConnell (who also is known as Tim Scott). The song is an unusual one within the Springsteen canon, almost a children's song in structure and reminds one more of Bobby McFerrin than Chuck Berry. Only about a minute of this first take is shown in the film, though the song is reprised later in the sessions.

The next segment of the film is one of the more personal touches. During a break in the sessions, Springsteen heads out into the cold New York night to go shopping. He stops at a thrift store and eyes a pair of boots. The only snag is, the store is closed and for a second you wonder if Bruce is going to commit larceny. But instead he walks away and is seen later on in the studio eating out of a big jar of Jif peanut butter. Springsteen and Chuck Plotkin, and the other studio employees, debate how to properly scoop peanut butter out of a jar without breaking the crackers. It is one of many intimate moments.

The next song is "Secret Garden." Landau tells us here that it's "a song that Bruce had for years," and that he couldn't decide whether to save for his solo record or work up with the E Streeters. Bruce is then shown teaching the band the song and the key is debated, while the band takes notes. Bruce says, "I just

Blood Brothers



NEW FILM TAKES YOU INSIDE THE STUDIO
BY CHARLES R. CROSS

kinda souped it up. I'll just show you how I was playing it," and with that he moves to the piano and we get a brief glimpse of the song in its barest form, reminiscent of "Real World" from the Chrisc Institute Benefit.

Then the band takes the song on and we get, for the first time in the film, a complete version of a song, this take very similar to the album version (3:47), though not exactly the same (perhaps different through mixing and overdubbing). Bruce is ecstatic at the end of the take. "We're whipping the demo," he says. With this song completed, or at least "whipped," the band takes a break and the first session ends.

Though the film is presented chronologically, not all the footage follows in order of being shot. Next up we get the "Murder Incorporated" video shoot, which as any fan will know, did not happen in the middle of the *Greatest Hits* sessions. This section is titled "The Music Video." It begins with Bruce and Patti walking down the streets of New York and having people shout at them from second story windows. The setting for much of this section is the backstage area at Tramps, and Jonathan Demme is the informal host for most of the interviews during this part.

The band is shown in the tiny backstage area of Tramps and this time around they are learning "Murder Incorporated" from Bruce. Several of the band members remember it from their *Born in the USA* session—a full 12 years prior?—and help teach the members who weren't there (Nils, Patti). There are snippets of "Two Hearts" and "Cadillac Ranch." The portrait of the band rehearsing is again an intimacy fans have previously never been privy to and when someone shouts out "Who remembers 'You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)'?" it's heart-warming. What Springsteen has frequently called "The Big Book of Lyrics" is seen resting on a stand and Bruce casually flips through it. Fans have always assumed that "The Big Book of Lyrics" is simply a transcription of "Bruce Springsteen Complete" and this quick glance would confirm this: At one point the page for "Protection" is seen, a song that is included in "Complete" but that the band has never played live.

Bruce and the band climb onstage and the full video of "Murder Incorporated" is shown but interspersed with footage of Demme and other behind-the-scenes shots. The vocal sounds different than the one used in the music video, perhaps a different mix or take.

After the show, Springsteen is shown talking to fans at the foot of the stage, answering questions on where he got his guitar. The footage cuts to Bruce and Patti getting in their car and heading home for the evening and once again getting deluged with fans. A fan named "Mike" comes up to Bruce and says what many fans probably feel: "You have brought me hours of enjoyment, more than anyone else on the planet." It's obviously a sincere thought but seeing it on film also reminds us how often Springsteen is the subject of such adoration and while Bruce is friendly, he's also tired and wants to get home.

"TAKE TWO" IS THE TITLE OF THE NEXT SEGMENT.

The band is back in the studio and some of the buoyancy of the previous session is gone as the group tackles the task of coming up with a version of "Blood Brothers" that will satisfy Bruce. Bruce is seen writing songs in a new notebook. The band then goes into yet another take of the song with the final version of the lyrics, though still not at the right tempo.

Jon Landau is the subject of a few minutes of interview where he talks about the merits of issuing a press release about the sessions. He explains that part of the reason for putting out a press release (something the Springsteen organization very rarely does) is to force them to commit to finishing the project. "We're talking to ourselves too," he says. "It's really as much for us as for the public."

Interspersed with the Landau interviews are more takes of "High Hopes," this time including Lisa Lowell, Soosie Tyrell, and Patti Scialfa on background vocals. Yet another take includes sax and vocals from Bruce.

Next up is "This Hard Land," and like the other songs, it begins with Bruce teaching the band, particularly the new members, the song once again. Bruce says, revealingly, "I've actually listened to this one recently," a suggestion that makes one wonder how often he does listen to his unreleased material. Max remembers the tune and reminds Bruce that there's a part where the drums suddenly break in, and Bruce smiles when he realizes that Weinberg is right. A brief interview with Toby Scott (the only person interviewed who is not identified) follows. He talks about how amazing it is to record with Bruce, and how if there's time left during a session, Bruce "starts flipping through the old notebook" and the band might try an unplanned song.

The band gives "This Hard Land" a try, and this take includes lots of harmonica and Little Steven on mandolin (Steven is not seen in the first segment, since he wasn't involved in the studio sessions until the end). Bruce says, "I like everything, Steve, but that 'Never on Sunday' stuff." Steve jokes and roles his eyes, showing us—as we've heard all along from many different sources—that he really is an emotional cornerstone of the E Street Band, if only for the sense of levity he brings to the studio.

Plotkin then sums up a Springsteen studio session: "The whole thing happens at once. At the end of the four minutes, you've made a record." And with

that we get almost a full take of "This Hard Land," and this time around the band has nailed it. Bruce is then seen sitting behind the mixing board during playback with the hat again. "That take's good," he says. "Everybody is playing spectacular." Landau later describes the sessions as "the most relaxed recording we've ever done." One other interesting note: The film also confirms the addition of an extra percussion player at the sessions. Frank Pagano is seen in the background, and is credited on *Greatest Hits*.

"The Mix" is the next section of the film. It begins with a short debate about the title of the record itself. Should it be called *Greatest Hits* or something else? At this point, according to what Springsteen and Landau say, the record may be called *This Hard Land*. "This song seems to be so strong right now," Landau says by way of explanation. Bruce is also seen leafing through possible cover designs for the album, most of which seem to be variations on the Annie Leibovitz photo that was the original concept behind *Born in the USA* (the picture of him in front of the painted flag that was eventually used inside the *Greatest Hits* sleeve). The cover that was actually used is also shown, but at this point the words "Wild and the Innocent" are still part of the image, scripted on Bruce's back.

From the scene where the band is discussing album covers, the film cuts to another segment titled "Back in Your Arms Again." The band goes through two takes of this song and the second take is very close to complete. The song is your basic love song, one of the most straightforward love songs that Springsteen has ever written. That, combined with the astounding performance he puts on in the studio nailing this song, make me suspect that if Bruce had released this song, it might have been one of his biggest hits ever. It has everything a hit song needs: a great melody, a powerful vocal, a catchy chorus, and it's about a subject that everyone can relate to (lost love). As Springsteen sings the song, Fritz's camera gives us several close-ups of Bruce's face. His eyes are closed and he's singing this song with all his emotion. It is the high point of the film, and the song may be one of the best unreleased Springsteen songs in a canon of work that includes many gems.

At the end of the second take, Landau informs us that Springsteen had cut a version of "Back in Your Arms Again" for his solo record but they had always felt it could use the band. Then Landau, Plotkin, and Springsteen start to decide what to use on the record. At this point in the sessions, the album is planned as a 15-song collection, including three new songs, "Back in Your Arms Again," "Secret Garden," and "This Hard Land."

Springsteen and Landau joke for a while about what they might be able to fit on the album and another big surprise comes out: "Frankie" was considered for *Greatest Hits*. This is a tune that Springsteen recorded both in 1978 and in 1982 but has never released. The argument against "Frankie" here is that it's almost seven minutes long.

"The Vote" is the title of the next segment, which deals with "Secret Garden" and the string arrangements. David Kahn is brought in to arrange strings behind this song and the film shows Bruce, Landau, and Plotkin listening to the finished arrangement. Eventually everyone in the studio casts a ballot whether they like the song with the strings or without. Though the vote is for using the strings, Bruce clearly has reservations (and, of course, the song was used without strings on the album, though the strings version was a b-side).

Interviews with Steve Van Zandt and Nils Lofgren follow. Steve talks about the envy he has about Bruce's writing ability: "He's always got half an album done."

THE FINAL SEGMENT OF THE FILM IS CALLED "TAKE THREE"

and it finds the band finally jelling and getting the right version of "Blood Brothers" down. Bruce starts off playing it acoustically again. As he plays, and the band eventually joins in, you realize you are watching the very moment when he figures out the song. Bruce says, "I hear brushes on that snare," and at that precise moment, you can tell he's got the song in his head worked through. He describes the sound he wants to Federici: "It's like being under dark clouds." Then, 70 minutes into the film, the band plays the version of "Blood Brothers" that will end all versions. At the end of this five minute song, Bruce and the band are ecstatic. "There it is," he says. "We found it." Plotkin adds his advice: "You got this baby." Bruce then jokes about the filmmaker, pointing at the camera, saying, "stayed up all night, Ernie Fritz."

And that is almost the end of *Blood Brothers*. Before the movie fades, and as credits roll, Bruce does yet another unreleased track, "Without You." This happy-go-lucky song has simple lyrics, but makes the perfect ending for the film. The audio switches back between the band cutting the song in the studio and the audio from the video, which shows the band and Bruce forming a human chain to bounce around the room and sing the song. The group gets together in a circle and starts creating '50s vocal group sounds. It's a light-hearted ending to a warm and gracious film.

Three new songs, several unreleased takes of songs, and an 80-minute look inside the studio with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. It might not win Bruce another Academy Award (though this is a well directed documentary), but *Blood Brothers* will get two thumbs up from Springsteen fans. 🍷

BORN TO RUN AT THE BOTTOM LINE

A TALK WITH ALLAN PEPPER

In the Spring of 1975, Bruce Springsteen was putting the finishing touches on his third album, *Born to Run*. The album was considered by many people in the industry as Springsteen's "make or break" album, after his first two suffered from weak sales. The title track was already a hit without being officially released.

In July of 1975, Springsteen began touring in support of the as-yet-unreleased album. A month later, in August, he arrived in New York City for a five-night, 10-show stand at The Bottom Line nightclub on the corner of West 4th and Mercer in Greenwich Village. The early show on the middle night of the stand, August 15, would be broadcast on New York's premier rock station of the day, WNEW-FM.

The Bottom Line stand was two weeks before the album would be officially released, but it would be the chance for Springsteen to prove whether or not he could live up to the record company hype. The answer was clear. This year, the **20th Anniversary** of those legendary shows, the owner of the Bottom Line, Allan Pepper, takes a look back.

One morning in 1975, Allan Pepper, owner of The Bottom Line, received a phone call from Sam McKeith, Bruce Springsteen's booking agent at William Morris at the time.

Pepper, who was still in bed and not entirely awake at 10 in the morning, reached over and answered the phone.

"Bruce, five nights in August, are you up for it?" was all McKeith said.

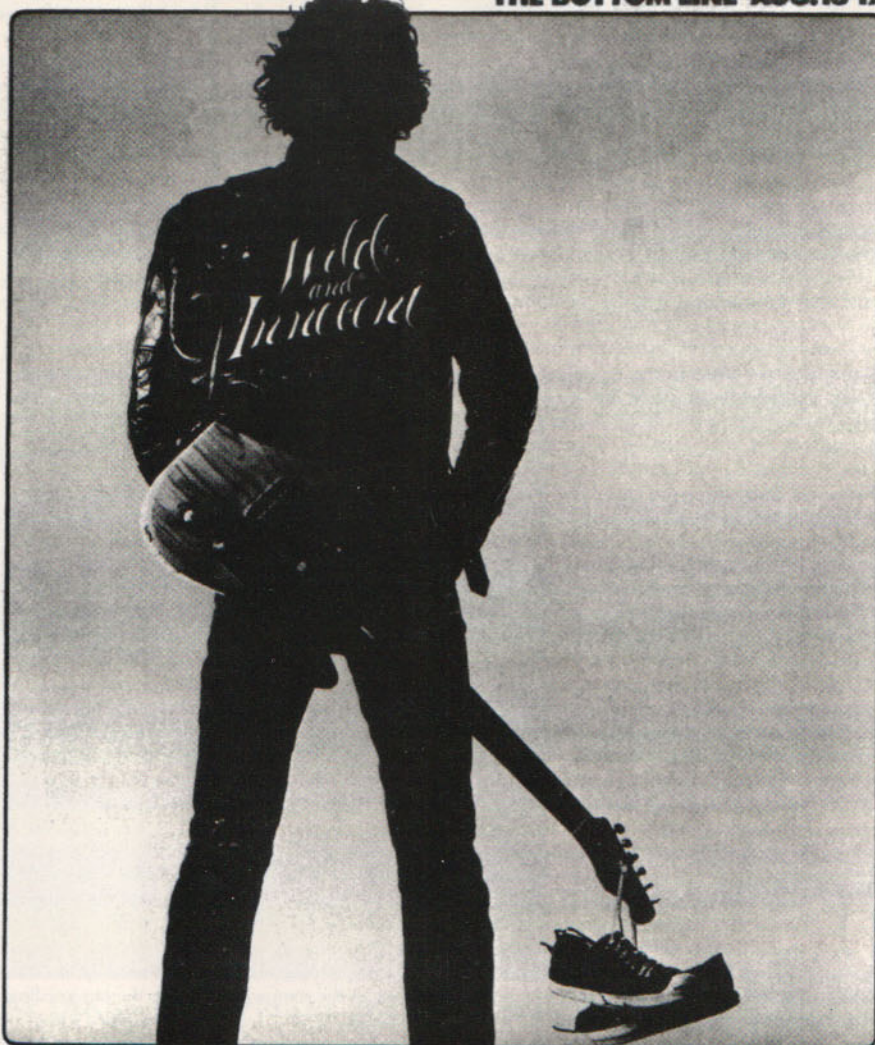
"Yeah, let's do it" was Pepper's response.

Although the financial details would be worked out later, that short conversation set up what proved to be one of the most famous stands in the history of rock 'n' roll, and the shows that would launch Bruce Springsteen from cult figure to national stardom. Bruce played five nights at The Bottom Line, August 13-17, two shows a night, with the early show on August 15 broadcast on WNEW-FM radio.

By Joe Lewin

SPRINGSTEEN

THE BOTTOM LINE-AUG.13-17



"BORN TO RUN!" THE NEW ALBUM FROM BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN. COMING SOON ON COLUMBIA RECORDS AND TAPES.

"Anybody who was there knew it," says Pepper in an afternoon interview in his office at The Bottom Line. "It" of course being that Bruce was on the verge of exploding into stardom. "You were seeing history being made before your eyes, and you knew you were watching something very special, that you were privileged to be at something that was going to be the real birth of a pop star. You absolutely knew. There was no question."

But when you mention the 1975 shows to Pepper, the first thing that he points out is that it wasn't the first time Bruce had played the club.

"The first time he appeared here was the year before, 1974, with a three-day engagement (July 12-14). I think it was a Friday, Saturday, Sunday," Pepper says. "At that first engagement, he didn't have it together yet. You could see he was still feeling his way."

"People look at him now and they see that he's very poised and polished and at the pinnacle of his success. But, like any artist, it took

a while to kind of get it together. In that engagement, to my mind, he was just sort of figuring it out or trying to figure it out. He appeared in an undershirt and a pair of dark sunglasses. Of course he played long sets and you could see he was trying to figure it out. The audience that was there—and we certainly didn't sell out any of the shows except for maybe one of the Saturday shows—was totally into it."

Then a year went by and it was time for Bruce to return to the club.

"I thought there was something special about him, but I didn't quite get what everyone was jumping up and down about," Pepper said. Then, right before the second engagement (in 1975), a couple who had followed Springsteen around to a lot of different shows, was waiting on line and talked with Pepper. The conversation went like this:

"Bruce has ruined live music for us."

"What are you talking about?" Pepper asked.

"There's no one else who compares to him and we can't see anybody else, we just follow him around." The couple said the only exception was the Kinks, but nobody else could do it for them.

"I remember thinking to myself at that point, 'Boy, what sick puppies these two people are,' and I asked them, 'There's nobody else?' and they said 'No,'" Pepper recalled.

"The irony is that after this five-day engagement that's the way I felt for the next five or six weeks sitting in this place. There was nobody else that could hit that stage, that could make you forget about his presence. I could truly understand how these people said nobody else could do it for them. He worked that stage enormously, he was on the posts, he stood on the piano, he danced. Nobody had ever worked a stage, this stage, greater than he did.

"We've had a lot of tremendous acts here who have come through since, we've had a lot of magical nights here and a lot of fun nights here, but none more special than those were. Of course he came back years and years and years and years and years later for the 'Saturday Night Live' rehearsals which they did here."

For those "Saturday Night Live" rehearsals in 1992, Springsteen's management had rented the club out for a private party.

"The funny thing is that he seemed almost more nervous with the new band. He might have been just as nervous at all three things but you couldn't tell that. On the first show (1974), it was the tentative, young, Bruce. He was feeling his way, trying to come to grips with what it was, what his persona was, who he was about, and, I guess, hoping his music would be accepted.

"The second engagement he was very assured and hit the stage with that assurance and he was solid, just rock solid. The third engagement he was kind of being tentative again. The tentativeness was, after having performed so long with the same group of guys, he was performing with a new band, doing a different kind of thing. I think the coincidence, or similarity, with the first engagement was that here is this guy saying, in a sense, 'I hope what I'm doing is accepted.' He was more nervous, but he was wonderful on stage. He's got a real ability for people to identify with him and to like him."

Despite the rehearsals being private, fans waited on the street outside the club in hopes of getting in. "I would've liked to have seen the fans get in," Pepper said. "But the truth is that they (Bruce's management) were renting the place and had a right to call the shots. It was a private party and I guess what they wanted was a very controlled situation and they were acting from their vantage point, they were acting to protect his best interests.

"I guess he was nervous and they didn't know how the band was going to be accepted. It was a closed rehearsal more than anything else. So, as much as I would've liked to have seen the fans, I totally understand why they did it and the truth is they had a right to do it and people should understand that."

Pepper however did make one observation about management not letting the fans inside. "From my point of view, the irony of it was, I think he probably would have been less nervous to have real fans here," Pepper said. "Here's a guy who works off the energy of his

fans. So, even though these people were all close friends and people who were hand-selected, probably from the standpoint that they were all very supportive, there's another kind of energy and love that's supplied by people who don't have any other vested interest in you other than wanting to own your music, own your CDs."

It's the lines of fans that stand out as one of Pepper's memories of the 1975 stand. "It was very crowded," Pepper said. "On that last night, Saturday night, you couldn't put another body in here, it was stuffed to capacity. There was a woman outside, who had been on standby, an older woman, and by that I mean that at that time she had to be in her early 40s, who was saying she had to get inside.

"There is something so special happening inside this club tonight, it is the equivalent of when Bob Dylan would perform at Gerde's Folk City and I just have to be there for the sake of history," Pepper recalled her saying to persuade Pepper and his co-owner at the time, Stanley Snadowsky, to let her inside. They ultimately squeezed her in. "This was somebody who was so sincere about her need to be a part of this that we figured out how to get her in," Pepper said.

The fan enthusiasm and the band's energy impressed Pepper too. "The energy was unbelievable," he said. "It was tremendous, they (Bruce and the E Street Band) just held you. It was like being pressed against a wall."

However, there was one thing about the fan reaction that it took Pepper's wife, Ilene, to point out to him. "My wife, who had seen several of the shows, pointed something out to me which I thought was very astute," he said. "About 15 to 20 minutes into the show, if you looked around, one-third of the audience was up on its feet, dancing, pointing at the stage the way people point at a stage when they're involved in a performance, and they were all males. And she said to me that she had never been to a show where the male identification was that immediate and that predominant, that he was really reaching out and speaking to the young males in the audience. They were so into it and so into him that the male identification was pretty amazing."

Besides the male identification, there was another type of energy in the air. "It was a very sexually charged kind of evening," Pepper said. "When you have that many people, when you have this place packed to capacity, into music, with all the emotions being sung about on stage: love, hope, desire, whatever, and that band, the air was really charged. It was very exciting."

But during the course of the show, it took a while for some fans to get hooked, which led to Pepper's fondest memory of the stand, which was a one word answer: "Rosalita." "If he hadn't gotten them by that point he nailed them," Pepper said. "They just galvanized at that point."

The fans who were lucky enough to make it to the shows got to see the energy and passion, while the unlucky ones had to listen on the radio to the famous broadcast on August 15. Although some people in those early days were confused as to whether or not Springsteen was a Jewish name, the broadcast raised a different question for those that hadn't seen him in concert yet.

"The curious thing is that we got at least half a dozen calls during that broadcast asking if he was black or white," Pepper said. "People actually thought, listening to it, that he was black. Vocally, I guess his voice had that soulful, gritty kind of quality to it. I found it interesting people would actually call and ask that. It seems to be a very strange question. Second of all, I found it interesting that he could convey that kind of soulfulness that people thought he could be black."

Tapes of that broadcast have been widely bootlegged, the most famous one being on the boot *The Great White Boss*. Tapes from the other nights have made the rounds in traders' circles as well, but most fans don't realize that video of those shows also exists. "Bruce had the shows videotaped and he owns the tapes," Pepper said.

Strangely, during those 1974/1975 engagements Pepper never had the opportunity to meet Springsteen.

"It wasn't until several weeks later that I actually met him, when he came to see Patti Smith perform," Pepper said. "At the end of the show I went over and introduced myself to him and I said 'You and I, we've kind of made history together because it was truly a historic performance. We made history together and we've never really met.' We sat down and spoke for maybe five to ten minutes. He was a terrific guy, very accessible, very friendly. We both agreed that the engagement that just passed was very special to both of us."

That feeling about Bruce being very accessible is something that didn't change over the years. "The thing that made an impression on me in terms of the last engagement (the SNL rehearsals), was that he was a huge pop star, a big star, but still very accessible and anyone could go over and talk to him. That as much as it might have been a trip for him to perform the big stadiums and arenas, he was still getting off on the fact that he was performing on a small stage in a club."

Although Bruce might not stop by the club much, except to see friends or a show—he recently saw a Rachel Sweet show and was supposed to show up at an Elliot Murphy show, but didn't—other members of the E Street Band stop by the club.

"Max Weinberg has come down here and played," Pepper said. "Max and I have talked about those shows. Clarence Clemons has actually come and played here. Garry Tallent played here a couple of weeks ago. Steve Van Zandt has been here to see shows. Without exception, all those guys have come back to either see shows or perform."

But it was those 1975 shows, played about a month before the *Born to Run* album would come out, that made rock history.

"It was Springsteen-mania," Pepper said. "He could do no wrong. It's interesting because if you have an artist with a body of work of several albums out, you have fanatics that of course want to hear the songs they know and the songs they actually paid money to come and hear. With him, they wanted everything, anything he had to give, they wanted. He played it all. You didn't have anybody disappointed. You couldn't have gotten more value for your dollar. There was no show around that could've given you anything more." 🐾

PHILLY vs. MIAMI



PHOTO COURTESY ED SCI AKY

AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN ED SCI AKY AND STEVIE VAN ZANDT

THE VOICE OF PHILADELPHIA, MEET THE VOICE OF AMERICA. That's what happened late last summer when Little Steven Van Zandt and WMMR's Ed Sciaky got together for an interview. Sciaky and Van Zandt have known each other for decades, and since they both have the same kind of sense of humor, *Backstreets* thought it would provide a good opportunity to catch up on Van Zandt's career. It's not your normal sort of interview because Sciaky plays a part in the history himself, as his early support of Springsteen on the radio was a key element in Bruce's success.

For his part, Sciaky calls Steven "about as down-to-earth as you can get, and he was always that way. He's a guy whose life is music. But he never really takes things that seriously. I think of him as providing the lighter side of the band." Sciaky says he first met Steve when Van Zandt was working on the first Jukes' record (he's thanked on the sleeve as "Hungry Ed Sciaky"). "We did spend some time going out for cheesecakes," Sciaky notes. His conversation with Van Zandt was first aired on WMMR, where Sciaky's Classic Cafe show can be heard every Sunday night from 8 to 11 (he also interviewed Joe Grushecky and Bruce in October).

Van Zandt, a few weeks after the chat, describes Sciaky as "the perfect old-time radio guy. He gets on the radio and it changes his whole personality. He's one of those guys from the era before DJs were celebrities—back when it was their voice and their knowledge of music that mattered and they could play whatever they wanted."

ED SCIAKY: It's Stevie Van Zandt, it's Miami Steve Van Zandt, it's Little Steven. Steven, you had a big career change and you changed your name. We knew you first as Steve Van Zandt, then you became Miami Steve, and then Little Steven. Why'd you do that, Steven?

LITTLE STEVEN: Well, next year I'm going to be somebody else too. My solo thing was not what it looked like. It was strictly an artistic venture. I didn't care about the whole celebrity... recognition thing. I just never have. I thought I should not exploit those years with Bruce. It was really silly to say I'm going to go out and now be "Miami Steve solo artist." Just what the world needs, another solo artist.

So why not just Steve Van Zandt?

Well, the nickname thing is really kind of a fun thing that we've always done. It just suggests that you're not taking yourself all that seriously. I take my work seriously, but... you know what I mean?

I think blues artists used to call themselves "little." There was Little Walter and others.

That was it. As far as I'm concerned Little Richard invented rock 'n' roll.

So Bruce called you Miami Steve because you wore Miami-type clothes?

Nobody had ever left town in those days. And I had gone to Miami and come back with those crazy flowered shirts and I kept wearing them in January.

Let's trace your history again, Steve. With the E Street Band?

I came in 1975, on the tail end of *Born to Run* for the *Born to Run* tour. At the time, I was just going to leave town for a couple of weeks and that was going to be that. I was in Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes at the time. You know, Bruce's career was in kind of a weird place. And he said, "Come on, I'm going to put my guitar down for a few songs. Come on out, get out of town for a little bit." I thought that would be fun. Then *Time* and *Newsweek* hit four weeks later. I was going out for four weeks and stayed for seven years.

He said, "Like no way am I going to become a big star overnight, Steve?"

Yeah. It was kind of like... over. Already his career had ended twice by then.

He almost got dropped by Columbia and they almost didn't put out *Born to Run*. That's how close he came after the first two didn't do anything, supposedly. Although you'd never tell it in Philadelphia. They were monster records here in Philadelphia, especially the second one.

I know, but virtually nowhere else. They did a very unusual thing—they just sent that "Born to Run" song to radio three or four months ahead of the album.

We got it here back in the fall of 1974 to promote the Tower Theater shows and we just kept playing it. Of course, there was February of 1975 with the Main Point show, then the Widner College show. They were amazing. I don't know if you were there and remember the Kutztown shows, when he was mixing the album in one studio, rehearsing the band in another, and then going out with the band and doing gigs on the off-nights. Amazing. And then, all of a sudden, *Born to Run* breaks. And then you're a member of the E Street Band and you hung in there for a number of years.

Seven years. And I produced about, what did it end up? I don't remember how many songs were on *Born in the USA*. I think there were 11 or 12 songs on there and I did about eight or nine of them. And then I left. And they kept working. They kept working for another two years or so for the other three songs. And I put out two solo records in the meantime.

Those were *Men Without Women* and *Voice of America*. And those are now available on *Razor & Tie* on CD. Then you did another solo album, *Freedom No Compromise*. And then the big *Sun City*.

Politics came at a weird time for me. I set out to learn about myself and I figured, "How in the hell am I going to learn about myself?" I better learn what's going on. If I learn what's going on in the world, maybe I'll figure out myself a little bit. And that led me right into politics.

All of my records were basically politically-based. *Sun City* was just one part of the overall thing. All the records were equally political. But that one, I really felt angry about, so I got all the other artists on there so it would get more attention.

You had Bruce, of course. And you had John Oates, Pete Townshend, Ringo, Daryl Hall, Miles Davis, Bono, Clarence, Bob Dylan, Jimmy Cliff, Herbie Hancock. Black, white, every color in between. It was a mixture of just human beings.

It was a weird thing at the time because the rap thing was

LEFT: SCIAKY AND VAN ZANDT IN 1976

already considered dead in the industry. The rap artists were not being taken seriously in the industry.

You had the Fat Boys and Kurtis Blow.

We had Melle Mel.

Bonnie Raitt and Joey Ramone. Everybody you could get, I guess.

It was very carefully selected, actually. If you look at the artists, every single artist was picked, not because of their celebrity status, but because of things that they had said or been involved with. We wanted people who were activists.

Linda Ronstadt wasn't on it. She was playing Sun City. That was her contribution to the debate.

No, Linda wasn't on. I was part of a five person group that was organizing it. And a lot of the guys were more radical than me, in terms of they didn't want to forgive anyone who had played there. They wanted to name names and stuff. But I really didn't. I guess I'm a little old-fashioned. When I think of the music business, I think of it as a family and I didn't want to start naming names and pointing fingers.

You called it "Artists United Against Apartheid." And here it is 1995, and Apartheid is gone, so whatever you did, it made some difference.

It actually did. And everybody associated with that thing can be very proud.

You remember No Nukes and everyone with that. Well, we've still got nukes.

Oh, that was depressing, Eddie. I mean we did that whole concert and record and had 500,000 people in the park and the next year they manufactured more nukes than the year before.

We do still have hunger and nukes but Apartheid does seem to have disappeared.

That's true. It was a very rare and unusual victory. There's one of those every lifetime.

Since Sun City, I know you worked with Bruce on the remix of "57 Channels."

I just happened to be in L.A. when he did the rehearsals for that tour. He'd done a remix and he didn't like it. So he told me, "Do me a favor and see what you can do with this thing." That was a lot of fun really.

You took a very funny song that's about cable TV, and you made it into, especially in the live show, a commentary on the L.A. riots.

It was the kind of thing where I thought, "Let's actually take this to the next level. Let's talk specifically about what Bruce was implying." Which was that when you switch around channels it all starts to become unreal, whether it's the comedy show you're watching or the news. You start to get numb to it. And I thought, wait a minute, there are some things going on here that are real. You can change the channel but it's still happening.

So that was one of the remixes you did. As a producer, I guess you are one of the main producers of one of the biggest selling records of all time. It's tied for third with Boston. They send you money for that, right, Steve?

Yeah. Basically, that's how I pay the rent Eddie. You don't pay the rent making political records. That's not a good idea. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone.

So somehow that little Bruce record ended up selling like 14 million copies?

Yeah. You've got to understand the songs that I did, we did live, just for the hell of it. We did them completely live. If he wanted to sing it again, we played it again. There are no overdubs. It was just an experiment. We were known as one of the best bands around, and we just wanted to prove it. I didn't think it was nearly as commercial as *The River*, and not nearly as accessible. So to this day I really don't. I think the songs on *The River* are much

more accessible than those on *Born in the USA*. But it was just the time, I guess.

You were obviously very close to it, but I'm close to it, too. I followed Bruce for these years. I don't get an emotional pull from the songs on that album the way I do from the earlier stuff but I can still see how they all were hit singles. It reached beyond the Bruce audience into this huge mass audience that suddenly discovered this new artist named Bruce Springsteen. I think making videos may have had something to do with it.

That may be. But it was reaching out and broadening the audience without compromise. It's very much a Bruce record and a lot of people's favorite Bruce record, even of the old fans. And I think there was a certain simplicity to it.

I think "Dancing in the Dark," it has been written, was the one song written to be a hit.

I was gone by then. There would have been a big argument on that one if I'd have been there. I'm glad I wasn't, because in the end it did help bring attention to the record.

And that really weird video that's so squeaky clean, nothing like the real Bruce, and Courtney Cox dancing with him, that's what really broke him out.

I guess, I guess.

It wasn't the b-side "Pink Cadillac," that's for sure. What have you been doing with your own solo stuff over the past few years?

I stopped to produce some things. I did a new Southside Johnny record, *Better Days*. I did a group called the Arc Angels. They were just great but they actually broke up very quickly. I also produced a Nigerian artist named Majek Fashek, who is one of my favorites. So I just started producing for a while, and before I knew it, five or six years had gone by. I've got two new albums recorded, though, and I'm just gonna decide which one I'll put out here. I don't know if I'm going to get it out this year, but I think maybe early next year.

So there I was in the movie theater to see the much hyped new movie by Hugh Grant, Nine Months, and then I hear this song "The Time of Your Life," and I think, "This sounds familiar." And I'm not thinking of you, because I'm not thinking you're going to sing a song in a huge movie. You're not the first thing that's going to come to mind. And then it says on the screen "by Little Steven." It's a great song. Is this a song you had already written?

No, I already knew Chris Columbus from the "Home Alone Two" movie, back when he needed a Christmas song ("All Alone on Christmas"), and I did that song with Darlene Love.

We play that song a lot. That was one of our biggest songs last Christmas.

I really like that song. That was one of the more difficult things to write. It's really hard to write a Christmas song. Look what you're competing with—you're messing with "Jingle Bells!"

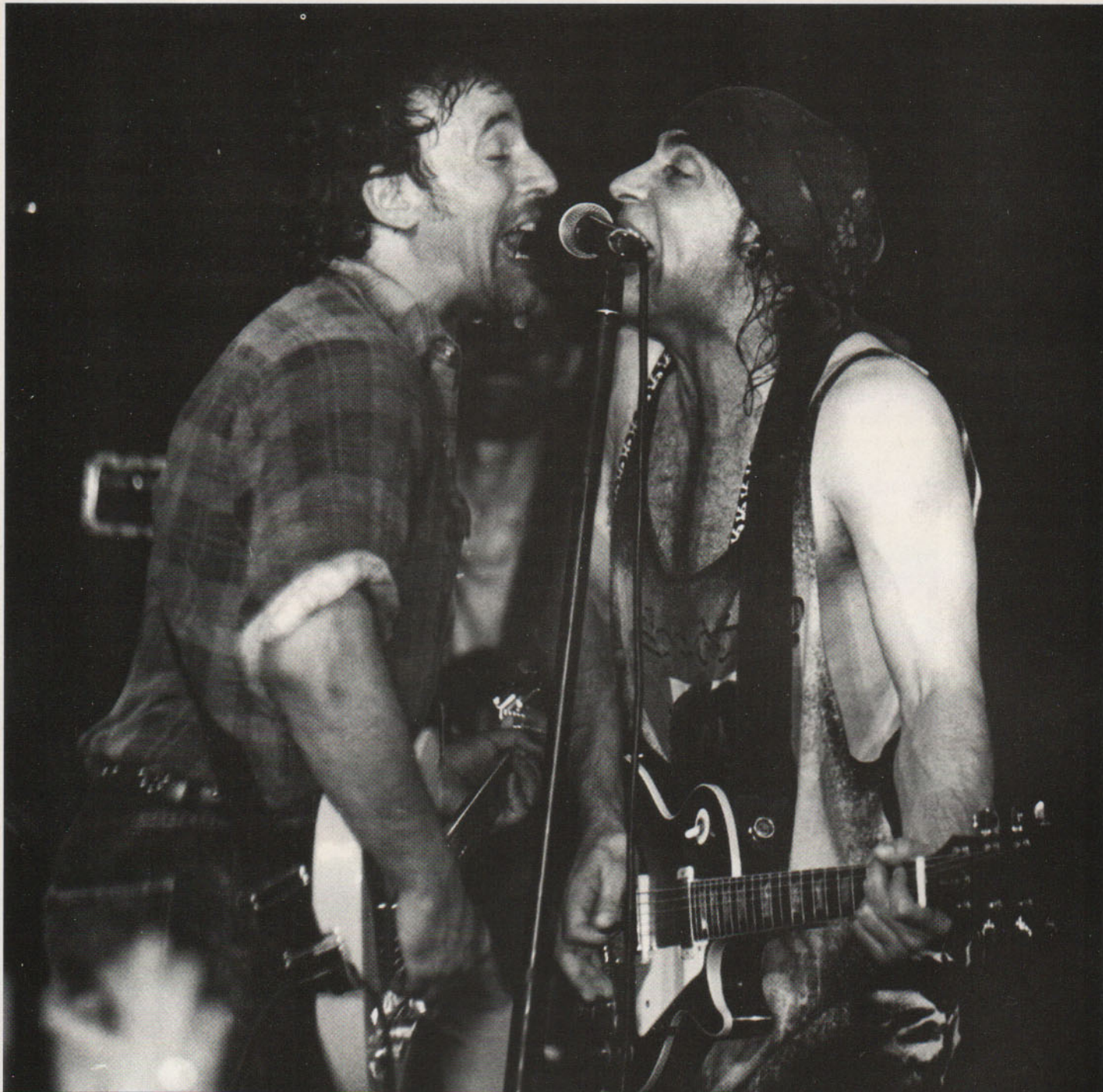
I was about do two months in Europe with Bon Jovi and the day I left, Chris called and said, "I need a song for *Nine Months*." I said, "Great, Chris, I've been sitting around here and then you call the day before I go on tour." He sent me the rough cut to Milan where I was playing.

And you couldn't play it?

No, he sent an American VCR with the print. So I watched the movie and wrote the song. And I cut it in Milan with Italian musicians. And I put the Bon Jovi guys on the record in Berlin. And I mixed in Madrid. And I mastered it in Abbey Road in London. And we did the video in Dublin. So it's absolutely an on-the-road production.

"Thanks to Johnny Bon Jovi," it says on the record.

I've known them a long time, since we were doing *The River* and Johnny was like the kid sweeping up.



"THERE'S JAMMING, AND THEN THERE'S JAMMING."

TRADEWINDS, 7/22/95

I met Jon recently when he was on tour with Southside and when I met him, he said, "Ah, Ed Sciaky, when I was a kid I'd buy these Bruce bootlegs and I'd hear you on there on the bootleg CDs." It's illegal, but I'm famous. But unlike you, I never got paid to be on those bootlegs. Of course, nobody gets paid for being on those. On that point, do you like the idea of bootlegs or does that really bother you?

No, I don't really care, honestly. If it's something from a live tape, if you're out there playing it, you're performing it, who cares?

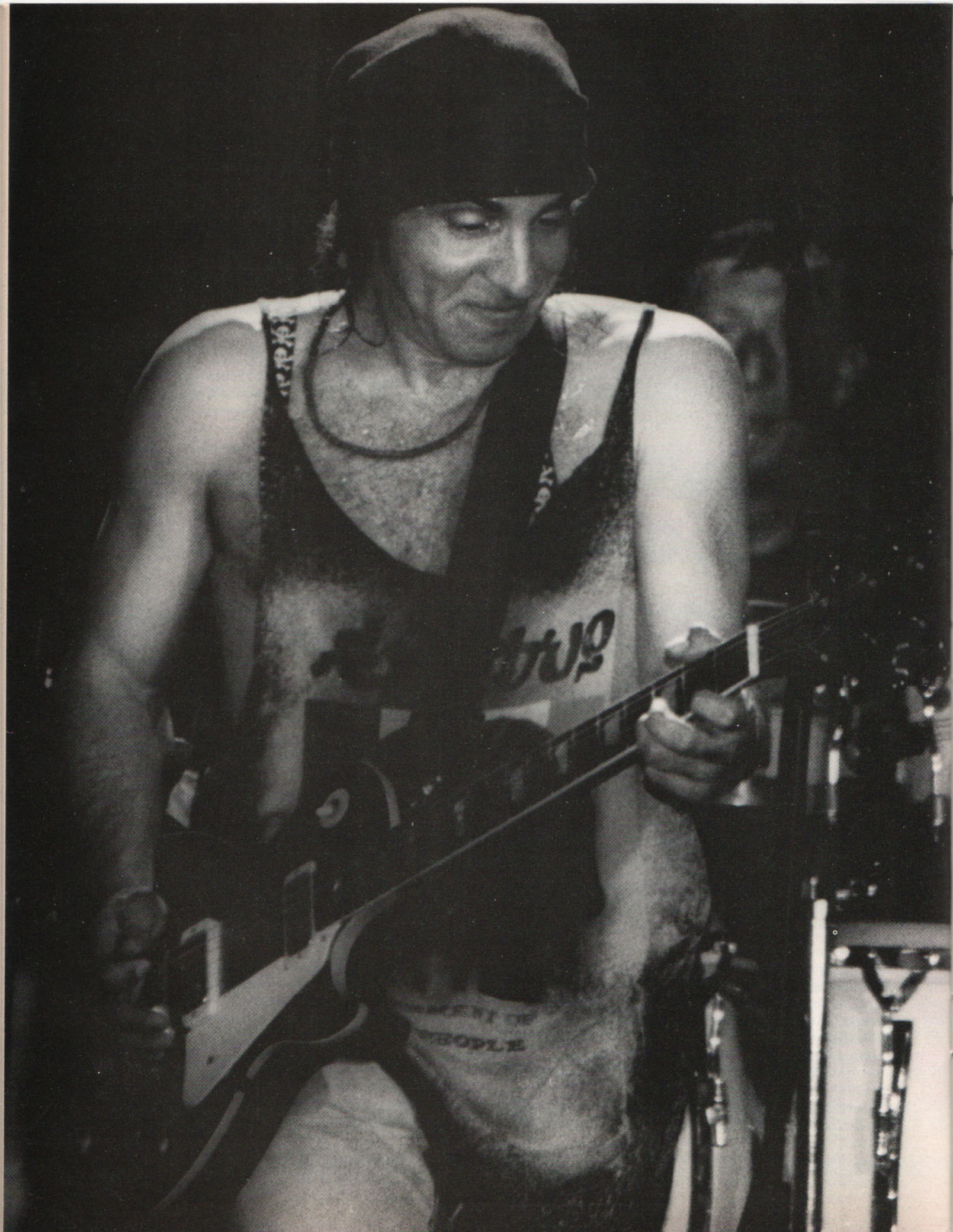
Does Bruce feel that way, because I think he's done a lot to try to stop the bootleggers, at least his people have?

Well, when it becomes outtakes on an album, from an album, that's a different matter.

Oh yeah. Stolen from the studio?

Yeah, that's a little different because that's an artistic decision. You have decided, for whatever reason, not to put that stuff out and that's a decision that only the artist should make, not an assistant engineer who is making money on it. But the live thing, who cares?

I'll tell you one thing, spending two months with Bon Jovi—it's the most I've ever spent with them—it's really something how good they are. This is one of the great bands. They've gotten so good. I don't think the American people have ever looked at them as a great rock band because of all their commercial success. That's a shame because people should give them a look. Richie's become one of the great guitar players in all of rock 'n' roll. They



are really incredible right now. Tico Torres is one of the great drummers, and Dave (keyboards) and Hughie (the new bass player) are all great.

Is your new record going to have "The Time of My Life" on it?

It depends on which record it is. There's one album where it fits and there's one where it doesn't. I'm not sure yet which I'm going to do.

Where'd you come up with the idea for the song? The song is about a guy who is facing the fear of commitment and the fear of fatherhood?

Yeah, the movie is about that, about growing up. I wrote it from the two sides of the guy talking to himself. The cowardly side saying, "I like things the way they are; I'm free of these commitments." And his better self is saying, "Wait a minute, this is time to focus and understand that your fears are going to cost you at least this relationship with this great great woman." It's one of those things, Eddie, where for all of us, it's very hard to live in the moment. We are distracted very much by the past or the future. You carry all the burdens from the past and worry about the future.

Did you always intend to sing this yourself or have someone else do it?

When they come to me as a writer, I'm just a writer. It was just that Chris fell in love with the demo and said, "You gotta do it."

It's a good tune, Steve. I guess this kind of thing, more than record sales, gets your name and voice out there for people to see, just for the publicity?

I don't particularly care about those kind of things. I really don't. When I put out records, I turn down most interviews and most media things. I'm not that interested in people knowing who I am.

I remember you coming down to WMMR in the old days. I remember the time Bruce comes in and he's got a cassette player and he's playing "Double Shot of My Baby's Love," by the Swinging Medallions. You guys had slept in a van in a parking lot or something in Philly. Remember that?

Yeah.

Those were the days when you guys would pop in unannounced while I was on the air.

Well, you were one of the only fools who was playing us.

I was right. I am vindicated. This Bruce guy was somebody good.

Well, you were one of the few, Eddie. But you were right.

So I go up to this sweat box, the Tradewinds, up in Seabright, because the word is out that Bruce is going to play with Joe Grushecky. And then out comes Bruce and then he does a couple of tunes and says, "I wanna bring out a couple of my friends," and then out comes Steven. We haven't seen you onstage in a long, long time. Along with Mighty Max. Did you get the call to come and how did that happen?

I live in New York, so I don't know too much about what's going on on the Jersey Shore anymore. Bruce just called me. I hadn't talked to him since I'd been in Europe. So he called me to say hello and said, "By the way, I'm going to go play tonight, come on down." And I thought it sounded like fun.

I remember many years ago, when Bruce was here in Philly and we drove him back to Asbury and we went over to the Pony and there was the Blackberry Booze Band. It was you and Johnny.

That was the original Jukes.

And Bruce got up and played "Little Queenie." He was a little drunk that night if I remember. It was wild. We drove him back to his little house that was at 7 1/2 West End Court.

Yeah. There was nothing really there in Asbury then. That was when that bar was about to close. It was a fortunate moment, because we were able to go in there and play all those crazy songs, all those original songs, old R&B and reggae, because no other bar would allow that. But because they were closing, they didn't care.

Last night, did you work out what songs you were going to play beforehand?

Of course not. You know you're jamming when he calls out "Gloria." There's jamming and then there's *jamming*. When he called out "Let's do 'Gloria,'" it was right back to the Upstage.

He did "Gloria," with John Eddie and the guys at that Playpen gig a few months ago. And you did "Murder Incorporated" and "Darkness" and that made it for me. And then later you did some other stuff from The River. It was great fun. It's funny, because hearing you talk about your political stuff, you have a serious, thoughtful side. And yet watching you onstage, it's always been the laughing, fun side-kick to Bruce. You've always had that really fun look on your face like you're having the most fun and not really a serious thought in your mind.

Well, that's true. And those two things balance themselves out. The only time it really is fun, and the only time I'm relaxed, is onstage. And that's when it all becomes fun and becomes physical.

It had to be tough for you to leave Bruce when you did.

It was because of our friendship and all that. The truth is, you don't really see people that often unless you're working with them. We've stayed as close as you can stay. But there are years where I'll only talk to him three or four times a year because we're both in different places or whatever.

Meanwhile this year, you get the call, come in the studio and do a couple of tunes for the Greatest Hits album. And there you are back in the groove again.

That was really a surprise. It was the first time I've actually been in a room with everybody for 13, 14 years. It was a long time. And for it to be that much fun, it was just like we'd never left.

But the video "Glory Days" lives on. And you guys will be hugging each other and rocking forever through MTV.

And for the first time we are talking about doing something together.

I gather that you guys, the E Street Band, are going to record something with Bruce?

We're talking about it. He's been working on another solo record, and I'm pretty sure that's going to come out next. For an E Street record, if we're all really going to do it, he needs to write one. It's different kind of stuff than the solo record. It really is. That's a little ways away. It's kind of interesting and nice that we're considering it.


And the rumor everyone is talking about is a tour but I gather there's no decision on that?

There wouldn't be a tour without a record. It wouldn't be just a nostalgia thing.

What I've gotten, from talking with the other guys in the band, is that you don't really know until Bruce calls and says, "Let's do it."

They don't call him the Boss for nothing, Eddie. It's his artistic vision and his trip. He has to be in that place where he wants to write an E Street record, which is a different kind of thing than he's been doing. So all that remains to be seen.

Well, it was great to talk to you and we're looking forward to an album from you, maybe sometime this year?

It could be. I don't think I'll get it this year but maybe early next year. 

TRADEWINDS, 7/22/95

POINT BLANK



The
**LYNN
GOLDSMITH**
Interview

By
**Bob
Zimmerman**

Mention the name Lynn Goldsmith to a group of Springsteen fans and, chances are, you'll be amazed at the variety of responses you'll hear. When I told friends and colleagues that I'd be interviewing the renowned photographer (and now author of *Photodiary*, published by Rizzoli), I heard everything from an emphatic "She used Bruce!" to "Please tell her that no one has ever captured Bruce on film like she did."

Certainly Goldsmith's lightning rod status has more to do with her personal life than her profession. At times in her career, Goldsmith has entered into relationships with the subjects she's photographed: David Byrne, Sting, and during the end of the 1970s, Bruce Springsteen.

Dating him throughout the 1978 Darkness on the Edge of Town tour, Goldsmith had unlimited access to photographing Springsteen. Long before music videos, MTV music news, and the internet, Goldsmith's remarkable photographs were the only connections fans had to Springsteen, other than his records and concerts. As a friend told me, "That photo of Bruce leaping into the air [in the '78 Rolling Stone cover story written by Dave Marsh] crystallized everything Springsteen meant to me at that time. And it stayed on my wall for a very long time!"

Clearly though, the dividing line for Springsteen fans was drawn on the final night of Springsteen's appearance at the MUSE concerts in 1979. Perhaps the best places to find out what happened are in Dave Marsh's book *Born to Run* (which is set to be republished) and Goldsmith's account in *Photodiary*. Springsteen himself has never publicly commented on the incident.

In a nutshell, it is alleged that having already split up with Goldsmith, Springsteen asked her not to photograph his set at the MUSE shows. When Bruce supposedly caught her photographing him, he reportedly jumped in the audience, brought her on stage and shouted into the microphone, "This is my ex-girlfriend!" From there, rumors surrounded the incident. One thing is for certain: it was the ugliest public act of Springsteen's career. Yet since it involved Goldsmith, many fans have projected the entire incident as being her fault. For 16 years she has kept quiet about the whole affair.

All of that has changed since the publication of her new book, *Photodiary*. In addition to showing off a wonderful retrospective of her photo work, Goldsmith's accompanying text nearly steals the show. Frank, witty, and not afraid of pissing off pop icons, Goldsmith details the ins and outs of being a "Rock Photographer."

Recently, Lynn Goldsmith took time to speak with *Backstreets* and to tell us the way she sees it. Point blank...

BACKSTREETS: Let me start off by asking you—you recently had your first exhibition in New York, and the Govinda Gallery in Washington, D.C., is currently showing as well as selling some of your prints—has this enabled you to step back and review your life and your work up to this point?

LYNN GOLDSMITH: The exhibition? No, choosing to do the book, choosing to do *Photodiary* was a choice to look at the framework of my pictures and to really decide why I had chosen musicians as the main focus of my photography. And why so many musicians were in fact the people who had been my friends or intimate relationships.

And why do you think that was?

Well I think that I, like many people... you associate at some point in your life, when you're hurting, with a song. And that song in some way heals you or makes you feel connected. In doing the book, I realized for me it was when I was three and a half and I was sent off to overnight camp and the counselor would take me outside of the bunk at night, because I was crying—I missed my mom—and she'd sing to me. I don't think that I consciously realized that until I was thinking about how music meant so much to me when I was an adolescent, but really it goes back further than that. I think that all of us who feel strongly about music feel strongly because there's been something in a song or in the sound of the song that made us feel like we're part of everything and everything is okay.

Why did you put out *Photodiary* now? And how long did it take you to put it together?

You're right, I should've waited till Christmas (laughs). I put it out now because I wanted to time it with my exhibition. I put off doing it for a couple of years. I had chosen to look back, but every time I looked back it was too much (laughs)—so actually it would have been out a few years earlier if every time I'd opened up my drawers I didn't get so scared. And so little by little I worked on

it and it took about five years. Because I did start years ago, I just didn't make the commitment to finish it.

Which was more difficult, sorting through the thousands of images that you'd taken or writing the accompanying text?

Well, it was all difficult because there's so much to say and there are so many more pictures that I would want in there. Or even choosing which picture of a particular person, in that there wasn't room necessarily for more than one. So there were a lot of decisions made all the time. I gave probably more space, in terms of number of images, to people that I had, uh... strong feelings about.

One of the things that I like best about Photodiary is the text. A lot of photography books come out and basically all you get for information is where the photo was shot. Maybe there's a reason for that. But in your text you come across as being brutally honest. I don't think many people would portray themselves as being difficult to love and as bullheaded as you intentionally or unintentionally come across in your "Friends and Lovers" chapter. Did you learn a lot about yourself and your relationships while working on that chapter specifically?

Well, I learn a lot about myself all the time because I want to learn about myself. I mean, that's my goal. My goal isn't to take the greatest picture in the world; my goal is enlightenment, and pictures help me to get there. Because they allow me to not only review a certain moment in time, but to give thought to where I was at, at that moment. The decision was not to do a "picture book" of the musicians I had photographed over the years. The decision was to do a book that was exactly what it's called, a photodiary. As I said, music obviously had a big effect on my life, on a lot of people's lives, and there was a lot I had to share in terms of what I had gotten from, not only my career as a photographer, no matter what the subject might be, but also my relationships with people. Particularly people who other people think are different than them. Maybe they think they have a better life. Maybe they think they're smarter, taller, fatter, thinner, I don't know.

But I think that by deciding to share, in the last chapter, even the most personal situations, it was because I felt that those were situations many people can identify with. You don't have to live with Bruce Springsteen, specifically, to learn the lesson of being with a person and not really hearing their needs, because you're wrapped up in yourself. I think everybody has been in that position at some time or another. But I sort of can reach more people about that because it

just so happens that that person was Bruce!

Now have you gotten any kind of reaction from Bruce or any of the other people in that chapter?

A bomb at my door (laughs).

You haven't gotten a reaction out of any of those people? I was wondering, even from, like, Pat Benatar, or if there's anyone who responded about the book or any of the things you've written?

No, the only responses that I really know about are the ones I read in the press. And I'm quite amazed at what some people read into it. You know I'm quite pleased that some people, I feel, got exactly what I was aiming to do. For example, you said I was being brutally honest. I mean, it's interesting, a lot of women reviewers have thought that I was attempting to display how attractive I am and how much everyone wants me. It's like, "Hello, where did you read that?! What book did you read?!" (laughs) And so I read a lot of stuff and I think a lot about how musicians and other artists—the press is a necessary part of the process—have to open themselves up to being misunderstood. And you have to learn over and over again that it's not up to you to make sure that other people are thinking the way that you think. It's not easy to let go of, though.

Let me ask you, you were talking about Bruce...

Well, I figured you're with Backstreets, it's one of the reasons for calling...

Well, in regards to your book, one of the things that there's been a lot of talk about amongst Springsteen fans... Well, there are two main things. Number one is the full-page black & white photo in Photodiary. I've heard people say you're exploiting Bruce...

Mmm hmmm...

...to which I've replied, "If she wanted to exploit Bruce she could have sold that photo or others to Playgirl or other magazines in 1985 for hundreds of thousands of dollars." Another comment I read was posted on the Springsteen internet digest called "Luckytown," where a female fan wrote, "The sexiest part of that picture is above the waist. The little boy look of mischief in the eyes peeking out from behind his hands... I just get a big grin on my face when I look at the laughter in his eyes."

Right! I identify with fans in that they want to

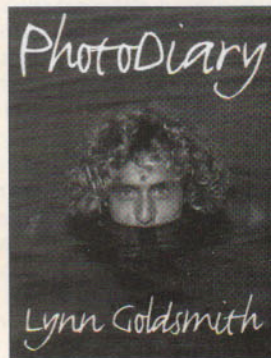
believe in love. You're absolutely correct. I could have not only sold that picture, but living with a person and being someone who's an obsessed photographer, I take pictures all the time. So I've got Bruce in the shower, you know? I don't need him with his pants, you know... It's just that when we were doing those [shower photos], those were like if I ran in the shower and took a picture. That was like being funny, you know what I mean?

This picture was actually taken during a photo session and I thought it was a very funny moment, which I wanted to share with people who cared about him the way that I cared about him. And not only could I have sold it before, but I could sell it now. There are people, different publications, who are doing serial rights on my book, in all different countries—people always want to buy that picture! But I'm not selling it! It's only to be gotten inside the book.

And that's not because, "Oh, you've got to buy the book to get the picture." It's because if I were to place that picture in other publications it would be exploitation. But I feel to put it in the book, I'm telling about a moment that happened in a photo session and something about our relationship. I'm sharing a moment where Bruce is really being a mischievous two year old! So, that was my choice. And I know that some people will turn it whichever way they want to in order for me to fit their idea of who they think I am.

The other subject that's being discussed amongst Springsteen fans is your version of what happened at the No Nukes concert. I'm not going to discuss your version of the events—I figure if people want to hear your side they can buy the book. But why did you wait 16 years to give your side of the story?

Well, I almost wasn't even going to put it in the book. The book is more about my path of enlightenment. The book is more about what I've learned in my life. My camera has been one of the passports that has brought



Goldsmith's new Photodiary, and

her 1984 Springsteen collection.



SPRINGSTEEN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LYNN GOLDSMITH



"It was his 30th birthday, which he was never particularly enthusiastic about. His idea was that rock 'n' roll was over when you were 30."

me into various worlds, where I learned things.

I feel that that's the only part of the book where I indulge myself. I never had any desire to speak to the press or to write any letter contradicting, let's say, what Dave Marsh might have put in his book. Because everyone's going to have their own interpretation. And I really don't care to get involved in that. But I figured, it always upset me, you know. And I thought, if I'm ever going to say anything, now's my moment. And I just thought that's what I'd do. I'm not going to discuss it again! Even now, in interviews, I'm asked questions and I want to say, "Well, excuse me, did you read it?" You know? [Imitating interviewer:] "Oh, so that was the end? That's when you two quit?" No, it's very clear in the book. We ended before that moment.

And you know, it's really not a matter of rights and wrongs here. What I resented was that I was a part of Musicians United for Safe Energy long before Bruce. That I had not only donated my services, but I was paying for the film and processing of over five photographers and I was really working. The acts that came in, they had their roadies and everybody paid for. So I felt like there are people who contribute to a lot of things who don't get any credit, and the people who do get the credit—the stars, so to speak—sell more records. They get a certain amount of press. And I'm not saying this about Bruce necessarily. I'm just saying that I feel as though I work hard and I was tired of hearing about me in terms of like I did something wrong.

Well, you go into detail in the book about how, before the (MUSE) concert, Bruce came over to your apart-

ment, and you guys sat down and agreed on the fact that he wouldn't show up at the venue until 10 pm and you wouldn't go backstage. Other than that though, you guys agreed that you could take photos of the show? That was pretty clear?

Well, you know, he's not God! And I was head of photography. And if you knew anything about me from reading it, no one's going to tell me, "Because I'm there, you have to leave." And that's not where he was at either. You know Bruce isn't like that. But Bruce was in a situation where he was not comfortable playing Madison Square Garden—he didn't like big halls. It was his 30th birthday, which he was never particularly enthusiastic about. His idea was that rock 'n' roll was over when you were 30.

I think often times people behave a particular way with people who they are close to, in a way that they would never behave with other people. Sometimes I talk to my mother a certain way. It's horrible, and she's my mother! Or my sister or your lover, you know what I mean. Unfortunately, this was not in the privacy of home. This is in front of a lot of people and Bruce, for some reason the night before, thought he kept seeing me. He played two nights and he thought he kept seeing me where I wasn't. And he would send roadies to go get me. And the roadies would come back and go like, "She's not there. What did you see?" I think that he used to get really nervous. He never wanted to play Madison Square Garden. He always thought he was going to keep it to small places—ho ho ho, yeah, right.

Now as you mention in the book, Meatloaf went backstage and told

Bruce what a jerk he was for...

That's what I was told by people who were there.

Did you ever hear what the response was? Was it like, "Get the hell out of here or..."

No! I think Bruce was pretty clear that what he did was not exactly up to who he is as a person. And most people are never going to say anything to someone who they think they might want to work with or want to be friends with, you know, there's a certain amount of power. And people would be afraid to walk up and go, "Excuse me, you have spinach on your teeth." They'll think maybe someone else will say it. But Meatloaf is a pretty protective kind of guy. So, I heard that from other people.

How many photos of Bruce do you estimate you took during your time together?

Oh, I wouldn't know that.

Not even an idea?

(laughs) No, I don't sit around and count them. I'm sorry, but I think that's a silly question. I never count my pictures anyway, but... Drawers, you know?

Yeah. Well, how did you guys meet? I know you met in '72 on the Rolling Stone photo shoot. After that did you just work on some photo assignments and then just...

No. Patti Smith.

I was going to ask you that. Did she introduce the two of you?

No, she kept telling me that she thought that he was the guy for me. And I told her that she was crazy. I wasn't interested in some guy who ate at McDonald's and lived in New Jersey. I wasn't! And so, she was working at a recording studio and there was like a big blizzard out and she told me to come down, she needed to see certain pictures. I said, "What do you need to see them for?" And she was very insistent. So I went, "Okay." I put on tons of wraps, cause it was, like, a blizzard!

And I got to the Power Station and rang the bell or whatever and I went to Studio B and there's music going on and I saw Thom Panunzio, who worked with Patti, and I didn't think anything of it. And there's this other guy sitting next to him. At the board, there were these two guys. And I started putting all my bags down and I brought loops and stuff like that and I'm just organizing my things. And I realize after a few minutes that that is not Patti's voice singing (laughs) and I look, I look at the board, and think, "Where am I? Did I walk into the wrong studio?" And I made eye contact with this guy and then it hit me! Ohhhh! So I said, "Oops, sorry, wrong studio!" But it wasn't, it was Studio B. So I grabbed all my things, my bags and everything and I ran out of the room.

So were you feeling set up?

Yeah! (laughs) So I ran out of the room and I still had all of my bags, so when I got outside the door I put them down and I was trying to organize myself. And he came out and said, "Hi. I'm Bruce," and I said (laughing) "You know, I know who you are!" (continues laughing) and he said, "Oh, I'm about to do a guitar solo, would you come in and listen?" So I said, "Sure!" and that was it!

And you guys were together, what, from '77 to...

I never say.

Oh, okay, that's fine. Were they working on "Because the Night" at the time?

No, that was later.

Did you have anything to do with that, since you were good friends with both of them?

Well, I'd like to think so, but I think it most assuredly would have happened if Lynn Goldsmith was never born. Because Jimmy was the real connection, Jimmy Iovine.

One of the things you said when you were on FX recently was that your two favorite concert performers were Bruce and Peter Gabriel...

Peter Gabriel?! I wouldn't say that!

You didn't?

No way, Jose! Believe me, I wouldn't say Peter Gabriel. Michael Jackson!

Really?

Oh yeah!

Okay. You obviously saw a lot of shows on what many consider to be Bruce's greatest tour [1978].

Bruce was the best, for me. Because I loved him (laughs)... No, Bruce was the best because he was just spontaneous. He gave every ounce of energy that he had. And just really believed that show was an important moment, no matter whether there were three people there or 30,000 people—it didn't matter. And at that time there were not 30,000 people. He was lucky if he had 300.

He was the only performer I knew who could talk, you know? He was a great storyteller. He was just so able to come up with stories that moved at a certain pace, you know? And he could have also been a stand-up comic. He was really incredible. He'd think about his stories and stuff before he went on, but he always changed them. And he would always... the band would do a lot of stuff that was always new. Like they would play a song differently because he would take them in that direction. You know, nowadays... well, I haven't been to a Bruce show in a long time, but I don't think it's quite that way.

Have you seen any shows since '78?

The last show I saw, the lights moved when he moved. And he always had to

move to the spot where the lights were. And that's when I said, "Uh, over!"

Sure, I understand that. There's a lot of people who feel that way.

Well, yeah, I'm sure that it's still a very good show and that he cares a lot, but it's different. It just doesn't have the kind of living room feel that I used to know. Besides, I was always proud of Bruce as a singer. I thought he was a really... his breathing and everything is quite amazing and he's really, really a great singer and I don't think people truly appreciated that, because of how low his voice is. But there were a lot of things that he'd do vocally, just as a musician that I appreciated a lot. So besides the drama of his... surprises in shows, was the fact that he was really a great musician.

You say in Photodiary about your relationship with Bruce, "I got a lot of self knowledge out of our relationship." If you had to make a guess, what do you think Bruce got from you?

[Pause] That's a very good question! I try not to think of what other people think, because you'll never know. It's ridiculous—but I would assume that... um... [pause] It's a hard question. I'd have to think about it. There are certain things I'd like to think, but...

The reason I ask this, judging from the kind of music you grew up with, according to the book, it seems you had pretty similar tastes...

Oh, that kind of stuff!

Well, no, really—one thing I've heard is that you actually exposed Bruce to a lot of different types of music that he may not have been particularly into, that you had a bigger record collection than he did.

We had the same, but different stuff. He introduced me to a lot. I mean we used to.... It was funny, he was like my pal, you know? We sat around and we played records and stuff. So, no, he introduced me to as much music as... more music than I introduced him to, for sure. I think what I introduced him to were some writers. Some books that he might not have come across. And going to art museums and having a different kind of appreciation of art. But I think as far as music goes he was a much more knowledgeable person than me.

You speak briefly about Joyce Hyser in Photodiary. I was always under the impression that "Be True" was about her. Are you aware of any songs...

"Be True"?!

Uh huh. Because it's about an actress, etc.... I was wondering if you were aware of any songs released or unreleased being about you.

Yeah, tons of them are about me.

Any in particular that you want to let people in on?

Yeah, "Point Blank"!

Really? You think so?

I don't think so, I know so! (laughs)

Really?

Yeah. I could name some others too but I know that one! *Because I said it!*

Really?! How did that come about?

We were fighting (laughs). And I said something like... I said, "I feel like you just shot me point blank!" And then the next thing I knew he writes a song!

What was your reaction to that?

It upset me (laughs). "I get mad, and you take my anger over this and you write a song?" "I could have killed him. Yeah, listen to it, "Pushin' everybody out of her way... blah, blah, blah." Ties that bind, you know, (reciting) I don't care, I have no... uh... uh...you know .. respect for the ties that bind!

Hmmm?

Blah, blah, blah. He was right! Dig it?

Okay, okay.

I mean I did, but I didn't.

Mmm hmm.

I mean I do.

So then you think that several of the songs on The River are about you?

Oh, I don't know. You know Bruce, like all artists, like myself.... It's a mixture of things. You can have one moment.... Maybe I inspired him by screaming at him, "I feel like you shot me point blank," but the whole thing's not me. You know, there's me, there's his mother, there's you, there's fans, there's reading a book, you know. So, I really don't think that there's any one song that's inspired by any one person. You pick, you know what I mean?

Sure.

You pick certain aspects and then you.... Especially for someone like Bruce who really thinks of himself as a writer, you know?

One of the things about the book is that in 1978 you were being asked to compromise your career. And I don't see why you would want to compromise your career. I mean obviously everybody struggles with career vs. personal relationships, etc. But looking back on it, if you had given up everything, who's to say what you'd be doing right now.

Right, who's to say. That's what I was always concerned about. Not necessarily with Bruce, but who's to say what will be. I think that the thing about love is that you have to surrender that, especially if you choose to be with someone who needs that kind of support. That's the kind of person you choose. Bruce was a person who as far as... I know that when he was going with Joyce, Joyce is a girl who wore low-cut tops and showed her... She had a very nice body and she



"I wasn't interested in some guy who ate at McDonald's and lived in New Jersey.

I wasn't!"

showed it! Bruce would not allow me to wear a tank top if it was 100 degrees out and I was shooting the show! I had to wear a t-shirt over it. He was incredibly possessive, he didn't want me to leave the room! Didn't even want me, like before the show, to go out to the hospitality room or anything. So, for the kind of person that I am (laughs), it was a little squelching. And it's just that because I *did* have my own career—let's say more strongly than someone like Joyce, who didn't necessarily have an identity at the time, okay?—it threatened him more, so he was more concerned with making sure that I wasn't able to go anywhere else! And I think that had I been more accepting or whatever, maybe he wouldn't have been as... what's the word?... Well, it *appeared* to be macho. But it was just a matter of being insecure that someone like me would disappear on him. Because I had other places to go, other things to do, you know? I'm busy! So that's a little different.

A friend of mine and I were talking the other day about the role of rock photography and how it has changed immensely over the last ten to 15 years. Back in '78 the photo of Bruce leaping in the air in Rolling Stone defined the fans' thoughts on their favorite artist. Now with music videos running 24 hours a day and the artwork on CD jewel boxes being so much smaller, the role of a rock photographer seems to have changed greatly. Do you agree with that and what are your thoughts on how it's changed?

Well, I don't think things have to be big to be powerful or effective. I think what's changed with the coming of music videos and the importance of visuals, artists have come to rely on hair, make-up and styling personnel. And there are very few that don't, okay? I mean, I have seen Bruce in some outfits that some stylists have put him in, that make me go, "Hello? Did I ever know that person?"

Because when Bruce and I were together we had very similar tastes. He had good taste! You know, I mean I think I have good taste. His taste was like mine! Trash and Vaudeville, old clothes, cool clothes. I thought he was really... I thought he had good taste! And then later on, in an era when I guess stylists are there to help out, you can get convinced that this is good or bad for you or whatever. And I just really feel like his natural tastes were the ones that were so great.

But in going back to what I was saying...

The role of the photographer? I guess it's even more important now than ever before. Because there is so much importance placed upon the visual. But "rock 'n' roll"—one of the reasons I didn't even do a book up until now was because I thought that rock 'n' roll photographer was a pejorative term. And that I was not a rock 'n' roll photographer. I did photograph a lot of musicians, but I worked for *National Geographic*, I worked for a certain amount of fashion publications, I'd do movie posters, I'd do stills for films. So I resented being called a rock 'n' roll photographer. Because

here are these people who seemingly don't get paid very much for what they do, they don't really know that much about photography... that's, anyway, what it used to be. And I really never wanted to be called that. But now that I'm a little older (laughs)—now that I'm older, being called a rock 'n' roll photographer sounds *really* young! So it's okay, call me rock 'n' roll!

When I was growing up reading Circus, Creem, and Rolling Stone in the '70s and '80s, I thought that the photographers must have had the coolest, easiest jobs at the magazines; your book completely destroys that myth.

Right!

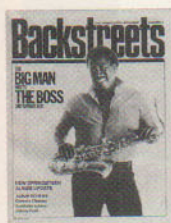
Is it still like that for you, or are things much better for you now?

They're terrible.

You still would get pulled to the side of the stage at a Stones show'?

It depends. Yeah, sometimes if you don't work things out in advance. But you have to go through so many people who you don't feel are intellectually on your level, and there's a certain amount of humiliation that one endures, which is why I've decided not to do the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I really don't want to be around, although I love Aretha and Martha & the Vandellas. But what you have to go through, all the egos—I don't want it anymore. There's a certain price that you pay no matter who you are. Sometimes you just want to say to some people, "Excuse me. Exactly what do you write? How long do you think your songs are going to be around?"

Backstreets Backissues



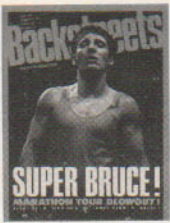
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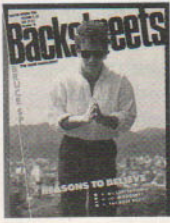
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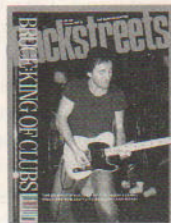
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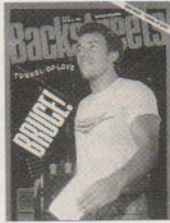
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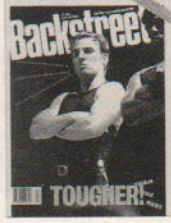
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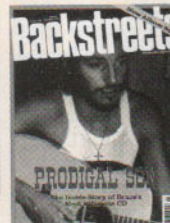
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ON COLLECT ING

By Richard Breton,
Lynn Elder,
and Jeff McDermott

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



•The Definitive River Outtakes Collection Volume One (E. St. Records, 2CD)
Packaging: 9
Sound Quality: 6-10
Performance: 9

This set, in conjunction with the fine *The Ties That Bind*, offers quite possibly the best representation of demos, rehearsals and studio outtakes available documenting the evolution of a single album (namely *The River*).

It's also evident by the sound quality of this release, which at times approaches that of *The Ties That Bind*, that E. St. Records has a source with the real goods. The

40 tracks on this release can be divided into three parts: Bruce's solo home demos, the October 1978 E Street Band rehearsals for three songs, and outtakes from the official studio sessions. Although the only "10"s are songs from *The Ties That Bind*, all of these are supplied here in the best ever quality to date.

In particular, Bruce's solo home demos from 1979 never sounded so good. There are some interesting glimpses at Bruce's songwriting process. Over the course of six takes of "Chevrolet Deluxe," lyrics are added, changed or discarded. Same with the music, with changes in chords and tempo. Of all the demos, the reggae-flavored and multi-tracked "White Town" is a highlight, but the most important one is "Oh Angel-yne," a previously uncirculated song that would eventually evolve into "The River." Of the ten different demos included (excluding multiple takes of the same songs), only three would progress into officially released versions.

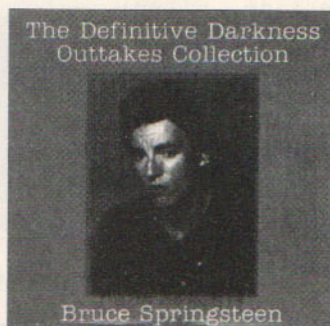
Multiple takes of two of the three songs that make up the October 1978 E Street Band rehearsals exist (and have appeared on CD before), but only the single best or most complete take of each are included here. The three songs are "I'm Gonna Treat You Right" AKA "Wild Kisses," "Tonight" and "The Ties That Bind." Although the earliest known version of "The Ties That Bind" was played in September 1978 (at a sound-check with a completely different arrangement and tune), the version here one month later had already mutated into something very near the arrangement and melody of the released version. Since these were only rehearsals, the sound is not up to what's found on the rest of this set. But it's still a step above what was previously available.

The bulk of this set is made up of various outtakes from the studio sessions that would eventually yield *The River* album. Probably the most strange of these are the four takes of "Point Blank" using a different melody and tempo than the 1978 tour versions, which would seem to have directly evolved into the version found on *The River*. Why Bruce would attempt to change

what seemed to be an already solid arrangement is not known, but these are faster and do show off some great lead guitar.

Equally fascinating are the early attempts at what would eventually become "Be True." Between the songs listed as "White Lies" AKA "Don't Do It To Me," "Mary Lou" and the three takes of "Be True," it's revealed that while the bulk of the lyrics remain intact, the melody and arrangement are drastically changed, so much so that they are totally different songs. Other highlights include two takes of "Loose Ends"; two of "Roulette," one of which has different arrangement, lyrics and double-tracked vocals; "Rickie Wants A Man Of Her Own"; "I Wanna Be Where The Bands Are"; and what amounts to the released version of "Independence Day" but with a much longer ending (and also previously uncirculated). Some of the outtakes sound better than others, but none have sounded this good before.

I can still detect some speed problems but overall this set is pretty consistent. As outtakes and demos CDs go, this one is definitely recommended. In the meantime, there's much anticipation on what surprises are in store for the promised next installment from E. St. Records of *River* outtakes.



•The Definitive Darkness Outtakes Collection (E. St. Records, 2CD)
Packaging: 7
Sound Quality: 5-8
Performance: 9

This is not meant to be a complete collection of all of the available studio outtakes from the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* sessions (no other volumes are planned), but supposedly the best versions of all the outtakes in the best sound quality avail-

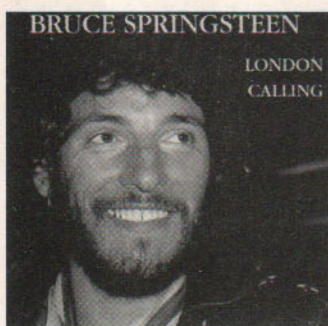
able. While overall not as good sound-wise as *The Definitive River Outtakes Collection Volume One*, it's a decent collection.

Of course, to be definitive in the broadest sense, this set should include at least one take of every available outtake from the *Darkness* sessions in the best-ever sound. Unfortunately, there are some omissions. Most notably missing is "Preacher's Daughter"—a true crime!—as well as "The Ballad" AKA "Castaway"; a 1978 version of "Ramrod"; and "Let's Go Tonight," an early version of "Johnny Bye Bye" sung to a tune which mostly resembles "Factory."

Of all the rest of the available *Darkness* outtakes, at least one take of each is included. There are also four instrumental tracks that have also appeared on CD before. To be fair, all the tracks that appear here have already appeared on the three separate volumes of *Darkness* outtakes called *The Iceman*, *The Way* and *The Promise*.

In comparison sound-wise to *The Iceman*, *The Way* and *The Promise*, the songs here sound as if they may be from a different source tape. With the exception of "The Iceman," those songs on the three-volume set that suffered from some source tape problems are complete here (most notably "The Promise" and "Hearts of Stone"). While the sound quality of the tracks on the three-volume set varied considerably from track to track, the sound on this new collection is more consistent. But it's still a mixed bag. There's more high-end, but also more tape hiss. The sound is less muddy, but there's not as much bass. And while the songs of the three-volume set seem to be mastered at the correct speed, the songs here seem to be mastered at a faster tempo (some slightly so, some much more obvious by comparison).

If you already have *The Iceman*, *The Way* and *The Promise* you'll find nothing new here. Sure, some of the songs do sound better, most notably the rehearsal take of "Janey Needs A Shooter" and several other songs, but I find it hard to fully recommend this set based on the speed problems. For those who don't mind that, this is a fine set of outtakes to own. It's consistent, but it's definitely not definitive.



•**London Calling**
(Parrot Records, 2CD)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 10

In 1975, the buzz surrounding Bruce Springsteen was beginning to spread abroad. Several shows were scheduled overseas, and the short *Born to Run* European tour was to begin and end in England, with stops in Sweden and The Netherlands in between. By most accounts the first London show did not go as smoothly as planned, Bruce was especially nervous and the London audience didn't exactly react in the same way as the US crowds. Things began to pick up in Stockholm and Amsterdam shows. By the time Bruce got back to England, he had his bearings and something to prove.

This is from the November 24, 1975 show at the Hammer-smith Odeon Theater, London, England. Peter Gabriel said at the time that this was the second greatest show he had ever seen (second only to Otis Redding). For years an audience tape of this show has been traded by collectors many times, always in a quest for the best possible version. Now, from out of the blue 20 years later, an almost complete soundboard tape has appeared and is now on CD.

Predictably, it is a great show. And at 22 songs it was his longest show to date. There was a large number of cover tunes ("Pretty Flamingo," "Sha La La," "Wear My Ring Around Your Neck," "When You Walk In The Room," "Quarter To Three" and more) along with Bruce's own. The highlights include a great "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," the first complete soundboard version of "Lost In The Flood," an especially fine solo piano version of "For You" and the final final final encores of "Carol" and

"Little Queenie" (in fact, six of the last seven tunes are covers).

On the downside, even though the show itself included 22 songs, only 20 songs are accounted for here. The opening acoustic version of "Thunder Road" is missing (don't believe what's stated in the booklet—it was played), as is "It's Hard To Be A Saint In The City" later in the first set. Also, the first minute or so of the solo piano "For You" is missing, as is what must be at least the first half of "Twist And Shout." It should be noted that a rumored upcoming CD uses the same soundboard source, but fills in the gaps with an audience recording.

Regardless of what's missing from this set, what does appear is great. This is one of the best sounding soundboard tapes of a *Born to Run* tour '75 show that I've heard. The very fact that it is from a soundboard is already making this set prized by collectors. Recommended.



•**Down in Jungleland Vol. 1**
(Winged Wheel)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 6-7
Performance: 9

•**Down in Jungleland Vol. 2**
(Winged Wheel)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

These are taken from soundboard tapes of two different 1976 shows, albeit almost six months apart. *Vol. 1* is from the October 25, 1976 show at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, while *Vol. 2* is from the May 10, 1976 show at the Municipal Auditorium in Mobile, Alabama. They are packaged separately, but it's clear from the track lists that they are meant to be combined to simulate a single complete show.

While soundboard tapes of both these shows are known to

be incomplete, this release further blurs the facts by offering incomplete versions of the available soundboard tapes. What could have been a decent 3CD set of the complete available soundboard tapes of these two shows ends up as an abbreviated version of each.

There aren't many great '76 shows available on CD, and this release doesn't change that situation. Better to seek out the complete available soundboard tapes of both shows.

•**Live at Max's Kansas City**
(Swingin' Pig)
Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 10
Performance: 9

In early 1973, a couple of Springsteen's shows at Max's Kansas City were taped for the first "King Biscuit Flower Hour" live music radio show, though only a very small portion was aired. This past summer an article was printed in several papers which prominently mentioned a tape of this show being considered for official release as part of the new "King Biscuit Hour Records" series of live CDs. Of course, the hold up for official release is getting the rights to release them commercially from the artists and record companies involved.

Although many sources attribute the date of the "King Biscuit Flower Hour" taping to August 30, 1972—and the date listed on the packaging for this particular set is March 7, 1973—there are many clues now to be found that now point to January 31, 1973 as providing the bulk of the songs on this set.

The first clue is the venue, but both the August 30, 1972 and January 31, 1973 shows were at Max's Kansas City. The second clue is the set list, which according to some sources doesn't exactly match the August 30, 1972 show but does match the January 31, 1973 show. The third clue comes from Bruce himself, when he introduces "Bishop Dance" and mentions playing a show in Chicago the previous week. While this corresponds to shows Bruce played between January 24-28 in 1973, there's no Chicago show close to the August 30, 1972 date. Even the aforementioned newspaper article mentioned that the tape in

question was from February 1973 (and at least a part of it could very well be from other Max's Kansas City shows performed in early February).

Various versions of this same show have been released on CD in the past, most notably on Yellow Dog's *The Unsurpassed Springsteen Volume Two*, but all have been incomplete. The bulk of this set comprises one show and includes "Mary Queen Of Arkansas," "Bishop Dance," "Wild Billy's Circus Story," "Spirit In The Night," "Does This Bus Stop At 82nd Street" and "Thundercrack." The two additional tracks appear to have been taken from a different night (or a different set played on the same night). The first of these is the most important, as this is the first live version of the rare "Saga Of The Architect Angel" that has ever circulated. The second song, "Song To Orphans," has circulated before and it's a good thing because unfortunately it's incomplete here (it is complete on the Yellow Dog version).

The sound is pristine, better than the Yellow Dog set. The source must have been a digital copy of the tape alluded to in the newspaper article. The fact that it contains a whole show and includes a live "Saga Of The Architect Angel" makes this disc a must-have. The likelihood that this will be officially released may be slim (given Bruce and/or Sony's past record). If you like early Bruce, don't pass it up!



•**No Money Down**
(Winged Wheel, 2CD)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 6
Performance: 8

This is from one of a series of shows from The Bottom Line in New York City on July 12-14, 1974. Bruce had turned down several "opening act" offers and a festival appearance to do these

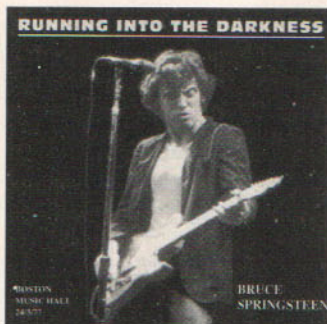
shows, most notably with Chuck Berry and ZZ Top. This particular July 13, 1974 show is historic for a couple of reasons, the main one being that "Jungleland" was premiered, albeit in a much different (and jazzier) version than would eventually appear on *Born to Run*. Other highlights include a bluesy "No Money Down," and one of the first (if not the first) live performance of "Born To Run."

In fact, "jazz" is the term to use for this show. With both David Sancious and Ernest "Boom" Carter on board (for one of the final shows they will play with Bruce), the jazz quotient was at its all-time highest. On both "Kitty's Back" and "New York City Serenade," Sancious' keyboard solos can be described as either straight ahead jazz comps or avant-garde free-form flights.

While interesting, some of the jazz stylings seem out of place. This is no more evident than in the middle instrumental section of the early "Jungleland." With some additional work it could have stood by itself, but in the context of the song it was out of place in almost every way. Then again, between the alternate lyrics and arrangement of the more recognizable portions of this song it was still very much a work-in-progress.

Since Bruce was starting to lean toward a different, more "rock 'n' roll" sound as evidenced by the early version of "Born To Run" (also with some different lyrics), it was inevitable that Sancious would soon leave Bruce to form his own band. Of course at the time Springsteen's shows were contradictions in style, from '60s Phil Spector ("Then She Kissed Me") to blues to jazz to rock 'n' roll.

Although an incomplete soundboard tape of at least one of these shows has circulated, this is an audience tape of a complete show. The source sounds processed (NoNoise?) but not detrimentally so; there's still some hiss and some of the louder parts are distorted. The audience is not intrusive, and at points you can clearly hear the beer bottles and/or glasses at the bar. While it doesn't sound great, it's still quite listenable, more than anything, it's a significant historical document.



•**Running Into the Darkness**
(E. St. Records 2CD)

Packaging: 7

Sound Quality: 6

Performance: 10

Whatever your feelings are about Mike Appel, there's no one person I know of that doesn't despise the fact that it was because of him (and the judge that granted him the injunction) that Bruce was kept out of the recording studio for well over a year following the release of *Born to Run*. To make ends meet, and to keep the band employed and on their toes, Bruce embarked on several short tours in 1976 and early 1977. The last 4 shows played in 1977 before going back into the studio were in March at the Boston Music Hall in Boston, Massachusetts. The final night, March 25th, has already been released on CD as Great Dane's *Forced to Confess*. This new set is taken from the previous evening, the 24th.

These shows marked a performance high for Bruce and the band. In addition to the band these nights, the Miami Horns were also present to flesh out the arrangements of several tunes.

There are hardly any 1977 tour boots to speak of, but then again it was just a short affair that lasted only a month and a half. There were no tapes recorded from the mixing desk from this tour, just audience tapes. So you have to make due with what's available.

The track list for this set is almost identical to that of *Forced to Confess*, except that on this set "Growin' Up" replaces "Action in the Street." The performance here is every bit as good as on *Forced to Confess*, maybe better, with rousing versions of "Don't Look Back," "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," "It's Hard to be a Saint in the City," and the encores including "Quarter to Three," "Little Latin Lupe Lu,"

"You Can't Sit Down" and "Higher and Higher." Also included is a fine version of "Incident On 57th Street."

Unfortunately, the sound is not quite as good as the best 1977 tapes. While *Forced to Confess* suffered from tape problems (most of which appears to be due to azimuth alignment problems which caused the mid to high frequencies in places to "phase" in and out—very annoying since there are better tapes circulating), it was relatively "smoother" sounding with less tape hiss and/or distortion on the louder segments. This set has both more hiss and more distortion, but not so much as to make this set unenjoyable. In fact, it's more consistent sounding than *Forced to Confess*. Even though it's too bad the source tape wasn't closer to the master, I still recommend it for the killer performance alone.



•**First Night in Detroit**

(Midnight Beat, 2CD)

Packaging: 5

Sound Quality: 8

Performance: 9

Here's another fine soundboard from the 1975 *Born to Run* tour. This one is from October 4th at the Michigan Palace Theater in Detroit, Michigan, just a short two days after the "bomb scare" show in Milwaukee.

This set contains great versions of "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," "It's Gonna Work Out Fine," "Kitty's Back," a fine duet with Miami Steve on the Temptations chestnut "Ain't Too Proud to Beg," and a killer version of "Little Queenie." The sound is great, all the instruments are loud and clear. There's not much hiss to speak of but I'll swear this one's in mono rather than stereo.

Heck, with the exception of a severely edited version of "Backstreets," all the songs are fine. Like the fine soundboards and radio broadcasts of the 1978

Darkness tour it seems we're blessed with a few nice radio broadcasts and several great soundboards of the 1975 tour. Lately it's seemed as if we've had several extremely nice '75 soundboards come out on CD to get in under the wire before the European copyright law changes went into effect, and I haven't really been disappointed with any of them. I recommend this one too.



•**Killers in the Sun**

(Winged Wheel, 3CD)

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 8

Performance: 8

Since every *Darkness* tour radio broadcast and most, if not all, of the best available '78 soundboard tapes have already been issued on CD, all that's been left relatively untouched until this past year are the audience tapes from that tour. Now if you were to look at all the '78 tour boots that have already been issued on CD, you might think that the market was saturated. In particular, the radio broadcasts have been bootlegged with a vengeance. One would expect that maybe the bootleggers would move onto a tour that really hasn't been fully exploited (like the *BUSA* or *Tunnel* tours, although the number of *BUSA* tour CDs has been on the upswing lately).

A year ago, the past record for CDs made from '78 audience tape was positively dismal. The first relatively decent *Darkness* tour audience title was *Pretty Flamingo* (the Seattle, Washington show on December 20, 1978), but that was more for the performance than for the sound quality which was lacking.

Then *Paramount Night* was issued on the Crystal Cat label (the Portland, Oregon show of December 19, 1978), which set the sound standard for '78 audience CDs. The sound of this new '78 show, from the September 3

show at the Civic Center in Saginaw, Michigan and also from an audience tape, is comparable to *Paramount Night*; this one sounds just a bit more distant. It's also marred somewhat by a loud annoying person close to the microphone that really wants to hear "Summertime Blues," at least when he's not screaming for other songs. In other words, it's just like being there.

Particular highlights include "It's My Life" (appropriately in the spot usually reserved for "Independence Day") and the triple-whammy of the one-off performance of "I Don't Want to Hang Up My Rock 'n' Roll Shoes," quickly followed by "Candy's Room," which segues into "Adam Raised a Cain" in the second set. My only real complaint is that the first CD ends with "Racing In The Street" and "Thunder Road" begins the second CD, which destroys the flow between the two songs punctuated by Roy Bittan's keyboard solo.

As I've said before, there are already plenty of great shows from '78 already out on CD, either from FM broadcasts or soundboards. After you've memorized all those shows, and even after listening to *Paramount Night*, you may want to give this one a listen too.



- **I'm Turning Into Elvis (Live in New York City, 1995)**
(E. St. Records)
Packaging: 9
Sound quality: 5—9
Performance: 8

This compilation is a grab bag of Bruce's 1995 tour of New York City from a variety of sources—satellite feeds, television broadcasts, and audience tapes. The sound quality varies from tremendous (on the Letterman show), to horrid (on Bruce's guest spot with Soul Asylum). The quality of the performance also varies from the wonderful

(Sony Studios), to the uninspired (why Bruce ever thought to do a duet with Melissa-out-of-key-Etheridge is beyond me).

The disc kicks off with an almost complete tape of Bruce and the E Streeters' appearance on Letterman. It does include "Money (That's What I Want)" which did not air, and there's "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" (although the song is not complete and Bruce sings the same verse over and over). This is followed by "Thunder Road" with Melissa, a great reason to have a skip button on your CD player.

After the live "Murder Inc." (the official release is better) and the horrid Soul Asylum spot, are five tracks from Sony Studios, most likely taken off a video feed. The official release again makes a couple of these tracks useless now but "Blood Brothers" is nice, even if this tape is not complete. The CD ends with the Rainforest show including the duet with James Taylor on "The River," "Burning Love," "Jailhouse Rock," and the title track, "I'm Turning Into Elvis." If you've been waiting for a great version of this new song, wait some more since the tape here cuts off the first lines. The sound is only adequate on this last section to boot.

Though most people don't buy CDs for their design, kudos go out on the packaging of this set: It's one of the best looking boot CDs yet, with the appropriate pictures used properly.

- **Coliseum Night**
(Crystal Cat, 3CD)
Packaging: 7
Sound Quality: 9
Performance: 10
- **Run Through the Jungle**
(Gamble Records, 3CD)
Packaging: 7
Sound Quality: 6
Performance: 9
- **Spectrum Night**
(Crystal Cat, 3CD)
Packaging: 7
Sound Quality: 7
Performance: 8

Here's an interesting group of recent boots documenting different stages of *The River* tour. This trio accounts for each of the major legs of the tour: the original U.S. tour, the break-through European tour, and the U.S. 1981 summer tour.

First off is *Coliseum Night*, which is from a soundboard tape of the 12/29/80 show at Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, Long Island, New York. Some of this show has been released on CD before, most notably on Great Dane's 4CD set *In the Midnight Hour* which more or less documents the show from the same venue on New Year's Eve (12/31/80). While *In the Midnight Hour* is a fine set, and for many years has been considered the best sounding boot released of a *River* tour show, many had problems with how it was compiled. For one thing, tracks from the December 29th show that weren't performed on the 31st were mixed in between songs performed on the 31st rather than compiled together on the fourth disc. But the most annoying was that in at least a couple of places songs performed on the 31st were replaced by the same songs performed on the 29th. Even though you got 4 CDs of music, you never felt as if you had an accurate representation of the December 31st show. In short, it felt fake. *Coliseum Night* succeeds where *In the Midnight Hour* falters by supplying the complete show from the 29th in sound that even surpasses *In the Midnight Hour*. There are too many highlights to list here. Of the three boots reviewed here, this is the one to get.

Run Through the Jungle is from an audience tape of the 4/29/81 show at the Ahoy Sportspalais in Rotterdam, Holland (The Netherlands). This is a great show, comparable to the Stockholm shows from May which have also been released on CD as *Follow That Dream and Teardrops on the City* (and were famous as vinyl boots before CDs were even invented). Unfortunately, the sound on this set isn't up to the Stockholm shows. The tape is uneven, as if it was being recorded on a machine that would automatically attenuate the loudest sounds. There's more hiss, and it seems to have been mastered a bit too loud so as to introduce "digital distortion" into the mix. But there are still plenty of highlights. The opener "Run Through The Jungle," a fine "Wreck On The Highway," and the audience really gets into the "Devil With The Blue Dress Medley." There are also five

bonus tracks from the previous night's show at the same venue, but these actually sound like they were mastered even louder. I wouldn't avoid this one, but I can't really recommend it either. If you already have the Stockholm show and crave more from the European tour, you could do much worse than this one.

Upon return from the triumphant European tour, Bruce played another series of U.S. shows in the summer of 1981 which can be described as a "victory lap." *Spectrum Night* is from an audience tape of the July 15 show at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This is a fine show—not a great show, but a fine show (not all of them can be great). I'm not saying that this one isn't worth picking up—there are hardly any post-European tour *River* boots. But there are better shows that could have been released from this leg of the tour. This is from a very nice audience tape, which is important because while this is a "fine" Bruce, show the audience reactions and participation in several songs is "great," especially on the second set openers "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" and "Hungry Heart." This also includes six bonus tracks from an audience tape of the Capital Center show in Landover, Maryland on August 4 (including "Johnny Bye Bye," "Jole Blon" and "For You"), but the sound is just okay. Not essential, but nice to have.



- **Nebraska Live**
(E. St. Records)
Packaging: 8
Sound Quality: 8-9
Performance: 9

This is one of those "theme" releases: gather all the best live versions of *Nebraska* tracks played during the *Born in the USA* tour and sequence them in the same order as the album. And to sweeten the pot, add a few rare

acoustic bonus tracks also played during the same tour. Although a boot with the same theme, title, and track list was issued on Flamingo Records a few years ago, the similarity between these two sets ends there. The E. St. version uses excellent tapes of mostly different versions of the same songs to compile a much better quality set.

Only two songs are from the same show (but a better source tape): "Reason To Believe" and "Sugarland" from the 11/16/84 show at the Hilton Coliseum in Ames, Iowa. Other than the bonus "Sugarland" track, there's also the great version of "Man At The Top" from July 12, 1984 at the Alpine Valley Music Theatre in East Troy, Wisconsin and a very nice "Shut Out The Light" from the January 18, 1985 show at the Greensboro Coliseum in Greensboro, North Carolina. At least two of the remaining five shows used to make up the rest of this disc have had their entire show put out on CD fairly recently. It doesn't matter at all that everything is derived from audience tapes, the sound is excellent throughout.

The only thing that disturbs me about this set is that in a couple of places Bruce's spoken intro seems to be derived from a different source tape than the song being introduced, leading me to question whether either the intro or the song itself are from the same show.

As for this set's actual usefulness, that's another question altogether. Anyone with a decent tape (or CD) collection from the same tour could create their own version that would be just as good performance-wise. However, only those with sources as excellent as these will be able to make one as good sound-wise. This is not an essential set, but still a very nice one and significantly better than the Flamingo version.

•**The Bruce Springsteen Story Volume 5: Dr. Zoom & the Sonic Boom**
(E. St. Records)
Packaging: 9
Sound Quality: 9
Performance: 10

E Street Records are now setting the standard for Bruce boots and this title is one of their most


important releases yet. It features a soundboard tape of the legendary early Bruce band Dr. Zoom and the Sonic Boom, a group that only played a handful of shows and for whom in the past not a single audience tape was known to exist. But this isn't some poor 1971 audience tape—it's a full fledged soundboard with phenomenal fidelity considering the time period it was recorded in. There are some fade-outs and a few problems but overall, particularly considering that this show is 25 years old, this is like finding the Holy Grail for Bruce fans.

As for the performance, from the first note this sucker rocks. Though many Springsteen fans will not be familiar with the blues-based party atmosphere created by Dr. Zoom, there are many insights here into the man that Bruce would become. For years some on the Shore have argued that Zoom was one of the best outfits that Bruce ever fronted and this new CD allows debate from more than the few hundred people who saw those shows. But not only are there rockers here, there's also some



suggestions of the acoustic artist Bruce would become two years later on his first album. At one point it sounds like something breaks in the band (the drum kit?) and Bruce is forced to do a long, solo song and the moment is one of the most chilling you've ever heard in his long history.

The only negative: the liner notes, which don't do justice to the performance. It's hard to understand how anyone could mis-title the first song (Dylan's "It Takes a Lot to Laugh").

This CD should be required listening for anyone who wants to understand Bruce Springsteen. But unlike your history books in school, this is rock 'n' roll all the way through. Essential. 

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PLEASE HELP ME GET LISTENABLE COPIES OF Bruce's New Year's Eve shows. Thanks! Al Valeika, 151 N. Malden, LaGrange, IL 60525.

LOOKING FOR LIVE TAPES! STEVE EARL, JOE Ely, Dave Alvin. Write to: Joe Schwind, 1582 Dockside Dr., Frederick, MD 21701.

WANTED: "LEAP OF FAITH" VIDEO. WILL PAY OR trade for a copy. Steve Ciasullo, 40 Harvest Ave., East Hanover, NJ 07936.

LOOKING TO TRADE TAPES WITH ALL VETERAN and beginner collectors. Your list for mine. Mark Cunningham, PO Box 822, New Monmouth, NJ 07748.

TAPE TRADERS WANTED: BRUCE, DYLAN, Stones, and more! Your list gets mine. Mark Raba-gio, 234 McKees Rock Ln., Lawrenceville, GA 30244.

FOR SALE

FANS OF PETTY, REPLACEMENTS, MATTHEW Sweet, etc., will want the new Marlowes CD. 11 tracks for only \$10 ppd. Mail: John Larson, 255 Rice St., Pawtucket, RI 02861.

SPRINGSTEEN VINYL AUCTION! LPS, 45S, picture discs. Write to: Boss Auction, 7325 Quivira #1001, Shawnee, KS 66216.

SPRINGSTEEN PIC DISCS (INCL. DARKNESS), 12" singles imports, promo vinyl—all great condition. SASE to: Steve Talia, 86000 Lorane Hwy, Eugene, OR 97405-9228. (503) 687-9652.

RATES

CLASSIFIED RATES: RATES ARE \$1 A WORD

with 10 words or \$10 minimum for all commercial ads, trades, wants, for sales, or tape trades. Ads that have no commercial intent, including pen pals, messages and the like are only 50 cents a word, 10 word minimum. No ads selling bootleg or unauthorized materials will be accepted. Write for display advertising rates. *Backstreets* assumes no responsibility for any advertising in the magazine. Please write our Consumer Services Department if you have any problems with an advertiser. Send all ads to Classifieds, Backstreets, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115, fax (206) 728-8827 or call us at (206) 728-7603 to charge your ad.

ROCK BEAT INTERNATIONAL: BRUCE SPRING-steen featured in issue #5. Send \$1 to: Geoff Cabin, PO Box 27636, Towson, MD 21285.

MOUNTAIN VIEW - PORTUGAL. JOIN THE 'I'M ON Fire!!' Bruce BBQ extravaganza at our small holiday complex on the Algarve (Portugal's Secret Garden). June & September 1996 (7 nights +). Full details from Mountain View Cottages, 60 Stirling Way, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL9 7QA England. Fax: 1920 870355.

BRUCE BUTTON BONANZA! 20 DIFFERENT buttons, all different sizes and colors from 1974-93. Some rare! \$20 postpaid, includes padded envelope. PCP Inc., PO Box 500, Bridgeport, PA 19405.

HUGE CATALOG OF SPRINGSTEEN CDS. BEST prices and service. Write to: Ten Mile Music, 1960 Cliff Lake Rd., Unit 112-250, Eagan, MN 55122.

SPRINGSTEEN COLLECTION FOR SALE. RARE posters, magazines, picture discs, 7" vinyl. Send LSASE for list. Craig Cerasoli, 375 Pennyfield Ave., Bronx, NY 10465.

FOR BID: BACKSTREETS ISSUES 2-5, 9-30, excellent condition. G. Schipani, 7480 Groveoak Drive, Orlando, FL 32810.

BOSS VIDEO! BEST QUALITY BRUCE SHOWS around from '73-'95 including '95 European-TV w/ E Street Band! Send SASE for list to: T.V., PO Box 1456, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

AUCTION: GREETINGS GOLD ALBUM AUTOGRAPHED on Columbia plaque. Min. bid \$600. Mail bids and correspondence to Tim Marros, PO Box 7231, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-7231. Auction ends 1/12/96.

SPRINGSTEEN MEMORABILIA FOR SALE. Autographs, posters, gold records, etc. First time available. SASE for list to: Rarities (Boss), PO Box 1456, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

BRUCE STUFF FOR SALE. SASE TO WRIGHT, 2001 Allston Way #403, Berkeley, CA 94704.

JOE GRUSHECKY: T-SHIRTS, XL \$15, CDS \$15, Tapes \$10, titles available: *American Babylon/End of the Century/Swimming With the Sharks/Rock and Real/Best of the Iron City Houserockers*. S&H: \$3 1st item, \$1 each additional item. Send money order to Bob Benjamin, 201 S. 2nd Ave. #37, Highland Park, NJ 08904. (908) 249-3911.

SPRINGSTEEN SALE! INCLUDING SCRIPT COVER, autographs, posters, rare photos, records, etc. Please call/FAX/write for free list. Billy Smith, New Hope Walls of Fame, 12 W. Mechanic St., New Hope, PA 18938. (215) 862-9811; FAX (215) 862-9812.

BRUCE BUMPER STICKERS: \$2, 3 FOR \$5. SIX types, three new. PO Box 290255, Brooklyn, NY 11229. (718) 891-8722.

SuperFans+SuperService=SuperSub

If you're a super fan of Bruce Springsteen, you'll want to check out the *Backstreets* SuperSub, a membership program that includes added services. With membership you get:

- **First class subscriptions** to all of *Backstreets* publications, including *Backstreets* magazine and all Backstreet Records catalogs and hot sheets. By getting the mag first class you can read it before anyone else, and by getting the catalogs first class you get first shot at rare, one of a kind collectibles.
- **The yearly SuperSub-only Backstreets Staff t-shirt.** A new shirt each year, and each design so far has been a winner. As seen in the front rows of most Bruce shows.
- **A free classified ad in each issue**—an \$80 value if you're taking advantage of this every time out.
- **SuperSub Hotline**—our unlisted number gives you much easier access to our SuperSub only hotline, where you'll hear all the breaking news first.
- **A bunch of other stuff** like the yearly *Backstreets* Holiday Greeting Cards. The SuperSub is pricey—\$50 a year—but the first class service is worth its weight in gold when you need to know *now*. SuperSubs are now available to overseas fans. Coming in 1996: SuperSub E-mail Hotline. For more information on the SuperSub, call Backstreet Records at (206) 728-7603. Or send check or money order to: SuperSubs, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115, e-mail: joeroberts@aol.com.

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Ordering information: MAIL your order with a check, money order, or credit card info (MC/Visa) to: Backstreet Records, PO Box 51219, Seattle, WA 98115. or CALL (206) 728-7603 10am-5pm Pacific Time. FAX anytime (206) 728-8827. U.S. shipping charges: for merchandise totalling less than \$15, please add \$3.75; \$15-\$30 add \$4.75; \$30.01-\$50 add \$5.75; over \$50 add \$7.00. Add an additional \$4 if ordering posters in addition to other items. Canadian customers: please add \$3.00 to U.S. shipping charges for airmail. Overseas customers: write to reserve or send credit card info. Please indicate surface or airmail shipping. Thanks for your order!

RECENT COMPACT DISCS

- "HUNGRY HEART" CD SINGLE!** An import from Germany and Holland, includes 5 tracks, 4 of them live and previously unreleased: Hungry Heart (studio), Hungry Heart Berlin '95, plus three live tracks from the Sony Studios performance, all with the E Street Band: Streets of Philly, Murder Inc., and Thunder Road.....\$15
- Joe Grushecky: American Babylon** Don't miss Springsteen's most important outside project in over a decade.....\$15
- Telltales Springsteen Interview CD** UK pic disc-CD with a great interview from 1978. Over 40 minutes, Bruce talks about *Darkness*, Landau's "Future of Rock 'n' Roll" quote, more.....\$15
- For You: A Tribute to Bruce Springsteen** Italian tribute to the Boss, produced by Ermanno Labianca. Features 17 covers by Italian artists (including the Rocking Chairs and soccer star Alexi Lalas) ranging from "Kitty's Back" to "If I Should Fall Behind"—a somewhat bizarre collection of reworked classics from nearly every Bruce LP, plus "Your Love" and "The Fever"....\$28
- "Secret Garden" US Promo** One track radio promo CD, orange PS insert.....\$15
- "Secret Garden" US 5-track** Collects the four tracks from the UK Limited Edition CD5 plus Pink Cadillac, with a blue PS: Secret Garden/Secret Garden (string arrangement)/Murder Inc. (live at Tramps)/Thunder Road (In Concert: MTV Unplugged)/Pink Cadillac.....\$8
- "Secret Garden" US 2-track** Contains "Secret Garden" plus the MTV In Concert version of "Thunder Road." Orange PS.....\$6
- "Secret Garden" Japanese 6-track CD-EP** Collects the best tracks from the other "Secret Garden" CD5s and adds *Roulette!* Unique green PS, with lyric booklet and obi, a fantastic package. Tracks: Secret Garden/Secret Garden (strings)/Murder Inc. (live at Tramps)/Thunder Road (In Concert: MTV Unplugged)/Pink Cadillac/Roulette.....\$25
- "Murder Incorporated" US Promo CD5** There was no commercial single released in the states—this is the one-track radio promo CD, with great pic insert, very limited stock! Rare.....\$18
- "Murder Incorporated" European promo CD5** European one-track promo in cardboard pic sleeve, very rare.....\$20
- "Streets of Philadelphia" European 4-track** Contains "Streets" plus three live tracks from the MTV In Concert performance, two of which were not on the In Concert compact disc: "Growin' Up"/"The Big Muddy"/"If I Should Fall Behind".....\$15

RECENT VINYL

- "HUNGRY HEART" 7-INCH PICTURE DISC** This UK 45 contains "Hungry Heart" and the Sony Studios take of "Streets of Philadelphia." Two different photos, the one shown is from the Berlin video shoot, and on the flipside the shot of Bruce in the convertible from the new "HH" CD5. Nice sleeve, clear with blue and red type as shown above with a numbered insert card.....\$15
- UK "Streets of Philadelphia"** A strictly limited edition 12-inch, featuring a spectacular Neal Preston shot of the Boss from the "Streets of Philly" video shoot. Contains the four tracks from the European CD-EP, fantastic!.....\$15
- UK "Streets" 7"** backed with "If I Should Fall Behind," with picture sleeve!.....\$8
- US "Secret Garden" 7"** backed with "Thunder Road" (live). With great picture sleeve!.....\$5



BACKSTAGE PASSES

The passes below are all unused (with back still on) and in mint condition. Take a good look—a few really rare ones here. ASO=After Show Only

- River guest pass. "GUEST" and other type in blue ink, b/w pic is *The River* cover shot. Rare.....\$15
- River generic pass. B/w cover shot, with "Bruce Springsteen, Backstage" in *River*-style type....\$10
- NY, NY 12/19/80. Madison Square Garden, shot of Bruce standing at mic, in green. ASO.....\$15
- Uniondale, NY 12/28/80. Nassau Coliseum. Shot of roadie in doorway, in red. ASO.....\$30
- Toronto, 1/20/81. River cover shot in blue, "Tour '81." ASO.....\$15
- Toronto, 1/21/81. Cadillac Ranch drawing in red. All Areas.....\$30
- Montreal, 1/23/81. River cover shot in black, "Tour '81." ASO.....\$15
- Ottawa, 1/24/81. Oversize fence style in red, ASO.....\$20
- Ottawa, 1/24/81. Cadillac Ranch drawing in blue-gray. All Areas.....\$30
- South Bend, IN 1/26/81. University of Notre Dame, gold type on green, ASO.....\$25
- St. Louis, MO 1/28/81. Photo of city/arch in brown, ASO.....\$20
- Kansas City, 2/5/81. "goin' to Kansas City" type in white on blue, All Areas.....\$25
- Kansas City, 2/5/81. "goin' to Kansas City" type in black on white, ASO.....\$25
- Hollywood, FL 2/20/81 "Working Personnel" round badge, red & white.....\$20
- Columbia, SC 2/22/81. Silhouette of state, arrow points to city, in black. ASO.....\$20
- Memphis, TN 2/25/81. White/blue, ASO.....\$25
- Memphis, TN 2/25/82. Brwn/white, All Areas.....\$25
- Greensboro, NC 2/28/81. Silhouette of state, arrow points to city, in blue. All Areas.....\$20
- Washington D.C. 8/4/81. Brown type & stripes. ASO.....\$20
- Denver, CO 8/16/81. Blue boot & type on light red ground, gold foil stamp. Guest pass.....\$25
- Denver, CO 8/16/81. b/w shot of city, gold foil stamp. All Areas.....\$25
- Denver, CO 8/16/81. Cowgirls in front of capitol orange photo, brown type on white with gold foil stamp. ASO.....\$20
- Denver, CO 8/17/81. Red type and shot of old city, gold foil stamp. All Areas.....\$25
- Denver, CO 8/17/81. Sepia photo of woman on bench below bronco statue, orange type, gold foil stamp. ASO.....\$25
- Los Angeles, 8/23/81. Blue stars on green, gold foil stamp. All Areas.....\$25
- Los Angeles, 8/23/81. Orange & pink stars on black, gold foil stamp. ASO.....\$20
- Los Angeles, 8/24/81 orange Chinese Theater on white with gold foil stamp, ASO.....\$35
- Los Angeles, 8/27/81. Brown Derby photo, in dark grey, ASO.....\$30
- Chicago, IL 9/8/81. Oversize, Rosemont Horizon photo in green, ASO.....\$30
- Cincinnati, OH 9/13/81. Oversize, Red photo of guy in sombrero, "Paradise," All Areas.....\$30
- Cincinnati, OH 9/14/81. Cincinnati Riverfront Coliseum photo in green, last show of River tour, very rare pass. ASO.....\$35
- Cincinnati, OH 9/14/81. Crew group shot in blue, All Areas.....\$35

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

- BACKSTREETS Springsteen: The Man and His Music** By Charles R. Cross and the editors of *Backstreets Magazine*. 1992 Paperback ed., revised and updated with new photos and material.....\$19
- BACKSTREETS Springsteen: The Man and His Music** 1989 Hardback edition.....\$15



•YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH VOL. ONE This is the first complete guide to Springsteen on bootleg compact disc. Thorough, honest, and well-illustrated, volume one of *You Better Not Touch* compiles reviews of the first 80+ titles in existence. Listings for each disc include separate 1-10 ratings for sound quality, packaging, performance, etc.; overall star ratings of 1-5; track listings, and, of course, plenty of exhaustive comments.....\$10

•YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH VOL. TWO The sequel: *You Better Not Touch 2* picks up where the first guide left off, covering approximately 150 CDs released from 1991 through summer '94. By *Backstreets* reviewer Lynn Elder. For honest, exhaustive advice on the latest Bruce bootlegs.....\$20

- Penthouse Poster Mag 5/76.** Great one-shot with lots of pics, entire magazine folds out into giant live shot of Bruce. Pictured at right. m- and rare! Regularly \$18, ON SALE.....\$15
- Lynn Goldsmith's Photodiary A** thick, beautifully designed book packed with great shots, a must for any fan of rock 'n' roll and especially for Bruce fans—a gorgeous book. Softbound.....\$35
- 50 Guaranteed Tips to Great Springsteen Tickets** Packed with good advice on preparation, strategies, and general ideas on getting the best possible seats. This will help with the homework. Be prepared when the time comes!.....\$8
- Backstreets Magazine #1** Ltd. edition reprint.....\$2
- For True Rockers Only #19.** Great UK Bruce mag., latest issue. (Call to check back issue stock)....\$6
- Backstreets Binder** The perfect way to keep issues of your favorite magazine in one convenient place. Heavy duty, attractive, black binder with gold "Backstreets" lettering. Holds up to 25 back issues.....\$15

T-SHIRTS & MISCELLANY

- Pin Pack** Official pack of 3 pins sold on recent tour, includes HT World Tour mini-placard.....\$7
- Unused tickets** A complete printed ticket from the May 4, 1976, reserve-seating show at the Mississippi Coliseum.....\$10
- Philadelphia Laser Disc** Includes not only the motion picture, but also the bonus video for "Streets of Philadelphia" with alternate vocal track....\$39.95
- THE OCTOBER ASSAULT T-SHIRT!** 6 Grushecky dates in October featured Bruce (and his wicked lead guitar) as "honorary Houserocker of the week." Commemorate the occasion with the official shirt sold at the shows, featuring the *American Babylon* cover on the front, and the October Assault dates on the back. Sizes are Large and Extra-Large, and supplies are limited!.....\$15
- NEW—BACKSTREETS T-SHIRT!** It's been years now since we've had a *Backstreets* shirt available, so we thought we'd do a brand new one—Logo as shown, white type on black background with brilliant blue border (like the cover of #49) on a white t-shirt. Available in L and XL.....\$12



THE
WALL

